

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Melchizedek: A Type of Christ

Scripture: Hebrews 7:1-10

Code: 1616

Take your Bibles as we begin, and turn to the 7th chapter of Hebrews for our study tonight. We begin this chapter, and we'll be discussing Melchizedek, a type of Christ. Melchizedek, a type of Christ, and to begin with, we'll consider Hebrews 7 verses 1 through 10, and I'm sure your heart will be enriched as we really continue all through chapter 7 and 8, and even into chapter 9, and deal with the priesthood of Christ. Particularly foundational are these first ten verses that we understand carefully the character of Melchizedek.

Now there's much in the Scripture that comes under the category of typology. There are many theological terms that we use in Bible study and in Bible teaching. One of them is typology. Whenever we talk about a type, we mean an Old Testament picture of the person and work of Christ. For example, in the Old Testament, we read about a brazen serpent being lifted up, and all who looked upon the serpent were healed from the snakebites; and then we hear in John chapter 3 that that is a picture of Jesus Christ; and it says, "As the Son of Man was lifted...as the serpent was lifted up, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up, and those who look on Him in faith shall be healed from sin."

We read in the Old Testament about lambs being slain, and then we hear the words of John the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Reference to Jesus Christ. There are many pictures in the Old Testament of Christ. We call these types, and Christ is the anti-type or the fulfillment of that type. Now, we've shared this many times in reference to much of our Bible instruction, and that's just a brief word of review.

But as we come to Hebrews chapter 7, we meet another Old Testament type. Now, keep in mind that types are always frail illustrations, at best. A lamb rates no comparison with the Lamb of God realistically. Nor does a serpent of grass rate a relationship to Jesus Christ realistically. They are merely humble pictures, meant to give us insight from an illustrative point of view; and we say, at the same time, that Melchizedek in no way deserves an equality with Jesus Christ; but he does serve as a very interesting picture of Christ; and we're going to see that tonight. I feel that this has to be one of the most graphic types of Christ, if for no other reason than the fact that it is given so much space in the New Testament - all of this area of Hebrews chapter 7.

Now, chapter 7 is really the main chapter in the epistle to the Hebrews, because it tackles the key question which concerned the Jews, and that was the question of priesthood. This was the basic question. Now, when we talk about a priest today, many people think about a lotta different things.

They think of a little man who's got a funny, little robe, and he goes around blessing people or...or passing out certain little elements or going through certain rituals. Or maybe you think of a...of a Jewish priest historically who wore all kinds of paraphernalia, had a funny hat on, and so forth and so on. Or maybe you know some other kind of organization that has priests, and they look a certain way. We think of priests as kind of offbeat little outside people with backward scholars and...and they really have a rather strange relationship to our society and exist in a kind of a religious world all their own.

But to the Jew, the priesthood was very exalted, and the priesthood was very intrinsic to Judaism. The priests really were the ones who connected men with God...and the Latin word for priest is pontifex. Take it apart, and it means bridge builder. The priest was the one who built the bridge from man to God; and to the Jew, the priesthood was really very, very important. To them, you see, religion was access to God; and since they couldn't go directly to God, they had to go through a mediator; and the priests were designed to be mediators.

For example, on the Day of Atonement, they couldn't go into the Holy of Holies and put the blood on the mercy seat. The high priest had to do that. In other words, he mediated between God and men. He built the bridge. This was how God designed it, that certain men would be called out, set apart, sons of Aaron and Levi, to minister as priests; and they would build bridges between men and God, according to God's specifications.

Later on in Hebrews, in chapter 9, it says, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission for sins." Now, the priests couldn't have direct access to God except through a sacrifice, because God had designed that sin would be paid for by a blood sacrifice. So the priest made the sacrifice, carried it all out, and, therefore, was the link between men and God. He was the one who actually did all of the technicalities of the sacrifice and offered the blood as an atonement for sin. God had made a perfect law, only men had broken it. Thus, men's fellowship with God was broken. They needed to be rejoined again; and when a man repented and made an offering, and the priest went through the ritual, then the genuineness of the man's repentance was shown in his obedience to the sacrifice.

Lemme clear that up so you'll understand it. I believe God. How do I know I believe God? By what I do. That's the Book of James. In the Old Testament, when a man repented of his sin, he proved the validity of his repentance by offering a sacrifice, and the priest administered the sacrifice and, thus, was the bridge between God and man. But human priests were frail, and human priests were sinful. Before they could ever offer sacrifices for anybody else, they had to offer sacrifices for themselves because of their frailties.

So in the Book of Hebrews, the writer wants to prove to us that there's a greater high priest than any Jewish one. That there's a greater priest than any Hebrew priest, one who doesn't need to make atonement for his own sins; and the problem with the Jewish priesthood was that it was so

inadequate. That what they did today wasn't worth anything tomorrow. They had to do it over and over and over again, constantly, constantly, constantly. There was never any final satisfaction. Every time a man sinned, he had to go all the way over there; do it all over again. Then he'd sin again, and go over and do it all over again. It was a constant going on. The priests never ceased. They were bathed in blood incessantly, offering sacrifices.

So the Holy Spirit in the Book of Hebrews shows that what we need is a new and better priesthood, a new and better sacrifice and points out that both of those are realized in Jesus Christ, who Himself is a better sacrifice and a better priest. Now, we have already seen in our introductory thoughts about Hebrews that the Hebrew...the Book of Hebrews is a presentation of the preeminence of Christ. That it presents Jesus Christ as the exalted one; and it talks about the fact that He is the mediator of a better covenant with a better hope. He's the bringer of a better promise and a better sacrifice, better substance, a better country, a better resurrection, a covenant not earthly but heavenly, a heavenly Christ, a heavenly calling, a heavenly gift, a heavenly country, a heavenly Jerusalem, and on and on you find these phrases in Hebrews.

In chapter 8 verse 1, we have a summary. "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is seated on the right hand of throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." In other words, we have a High Priest in the heavenlies not like any earthly high priest. Men needed a high priest because they needed somebody to build a bridge to God; but those men were inadequate, because of their own sin; and what they did, they had to do over and over and over again. And finally a great glorious Priest has come along.

Now, you see, to the Jew, this is very important, because he knows of no way to get yourself connected with God apart from a priest; and so the Holy Spirit says, "Christ is that perfect Priest." Not only does He fit the qualifications of a priest, but He supersedes any qualifications of any priest you've ever seen. He's far beyond...

So the Holy Spirit writes all of this about the priesthood of Jesus Christ, because this is the very heart of Judaism. He has talked about the fact that Jesus is superior to prophets, superior to angels, superior to Moses, superior to Joshua, in order to show them the importance of turning to Christ and the new covenant. He shows how Jesus is superior to everything in the old covenant; but the heartbeat of Judaism is the priesthood; and if Jesus is really who He claims to be, then He must supersede Aaron. He must be better than Aaron, and He must be better than every other priest.

Now, in chapter 4 verse 14, the Spirit declared that He was. Listen to it. "Seeing then that we have such a great High Priest that has passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession. For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly

unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Now, here, the Holy Spirit introduces the priesthood of Christ and says, "We have such a great High Priest. We have a great High Priest. You don't need the priests of Judaism anymore. You don't need the old system. There is a great High Priest. There is a bridge builder whose bridge stays, whose bridge remains; and once you cross that bridge, you remain eternally in the fellowship of God. There is such a bridge builder, and it is Jesus Christ."

So in chapter 4 verses 14 to 16, he introduced Jesus as a priest. In chapter 5 verses 1 to 10, he showed that Jesus was better than Aaron. He pointed out that Jesus was better than Aaron, and that was an amazing thing. And then he was going to go on and compare Melchizedek to Jesus, but he stopped in chapter 5 verse 11, and we've been studying that; and in 5:11 to 6:20, you have a parenthesis; and in that parenthesis, he says, in effect, "I wanna tell you about Melchizedek, but you're too spiritual stupid to handle it."

Now he says, "Mature," and we've...we believe and are committed to the fact that he's talking here to unbelievers, and he's saying, "Come on to Christ. Wake up from your spiritual sluggishness. Accept the new covenant, that you might have the understanding to comprehend what I'm gonna say to you."...They must understand that Jesus is a priest of a higher order than Aaron, that Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. That's 5:10. He just introduces that statement, and he says, "Oh," verse 11, "I'd like to say some things, but you're spiritually stupid." Then he urges them to leave Judaism to come all the way to Christ. They're right on the verge in order that, in the maturity that comes with salvation, their minds and hearts might be open to understand how Jesus relates to Melchizedek; and so he warns them all the way through chapter 6 to come to Christ; and then in verse 20, he gets right back to his point. "Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." And then immediately in chapter 7 verse 1, he launches into this comparison.

Now, it's interesting to me that he would say, "I can't say this to you till you get mature," and then immediately say it to them. If he was talking to Christians who needed to grow up, he would have had to wait a long time before he ever started chapter 7; but since the maturity that he's talking about is the maturity that comes in salvation and is a momentary maturity, he can then say, "Now I'm going right on for those of you who know Christ."...

And so he introduces Melchizedek, and he says, "Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek." Now, there's all kinds of conjecture about who Melchizedek is. Some insist that he is an angel, and this is a common thought. However, in chapter 5 verse 1, I think that is done away with, because it says, "Every high priest is taken from among men." Therefore, he couldn't be an angel. Others suggest that he is Jesus Christ, and the reason they say that is because there is so much mystery around him. However, it says in verse 3, "He was made like unto the Son of God." It does not say, "He was the Son of God." A rose is not like a rose. A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,

you know. There's a difference between being like something and being that thing, and I think, clearly, that, in my own heart and mind, Melchizedek is neither angel or Christ, but he is a type of Christ, a man...whom God designs to use as a picture of Jesus Christ. But it's not for us to play with that anyway. The secret things belong to the Lord, so we don't wanna spend a lotta time on that.

All we know about Melchizedek comes out of three verses in the Old Testament, and we'll look at those in a minute; but the whole place that Melchizedek occupies in sacred history is one of the most remarkable proofs of inspiration, and the unity of the Scripture as written by the Divine Spirit. The whole concept of Melchizedek is an amazing insight into the fact that God wrote the Bible. For example, in the Book of Genesis, we have these three little verses about Melchizedek. A thousand years later, we find a Psalm with just a single verse about him; and, in that, God Himself swears to His Son that He will be a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. That's Psalm 110:4.

Another thousand years passes by, and another...another verse becomes the seed of this wonderful exposition...about Melchizedek; and, you know, you can see nothing less than the divine order of the mind of the Spirit guiding Melchizedek and guiding Abraham with a view through all of these thousands of years to coming up to a perfect picture of Jesus Christ...

Melchizedek and Abraham had no idea what was gonna happen 2,000 years, at least, after them; and that's a...that's easily 2,000 years. The Psalmist had no conception, and, yet, God knew exactly what He was doing with the person of Melchizedek. You know what that tells me? That tells me the same God that wrote the Book of Hebrews also wrote the Book of Genesis. That's what inspiration is all about.

Now in verses 1 to 10, he tells us about Melchizedek. Now, I realize that's a whole lot of introduction, but I had to give it to you. All right, let's look at two things: the superiorities of Melchizedek presented and the superiorities of Melchizedek proven. First of all, they're presented in verses 1 to 3; and the Spirit unfolds this fascinating character for us. Look at verse 1. "For this Melchizedek...just coming right off of verse 20...For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him." We'll stop right there.

Now here we meet this guy, Melchizedek. We learn a few things. King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed Abraham. Now, this comes directly from Genesis 14:17. You might look at it for just a moment. In Genesis 14 verse 17, we read this. "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer." Now this is Abraham coming back after he's slaughtered Chedorlaomer and his three cohort kings, "And the king of Sodom goes out to meet Abraham on his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him at the Valley of Shaveh (which is the King's Dale); and Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him...that is Abraham...and said, 'Blessed be Abram of the Most

High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands.' And he gave him tithes of all."

Abraham tithed to Melchizedek. That's the beginning and the end of the all you'll ever hear about Melchizedek. You say, "Boy, how in the world could that signify anything?" It does, very much. Now listen to the what...to what happened in the record. In Genesis chapter 14, we...we get all the detail leading up to this. Chedorlaomer, incidentally, at that time, there were little pockets of land which were ruled by tribal chieftains many times who were really kings. There was the king of Sodom, and there was the king of Elamites, and there was the king of...of this little group and that little group, and they all had their own little establishment; and Abraham was a very important man who ruled over his own people of the tribe that was his; and all of these individuals had their little dominions, all in that area of Jordan.

Now, Chedorlaomer was an Elamite king; and he got together with three allied kings and raided this area. He came over to Jordan, and he raided TransJordan. Then he raided the Negev; and he defeated all these little city-states, as they were, around Jordan, including Sodom. He defeated that area and carried off a large number of captives, as well as Lot, Abraham's nephew. You remember that Lot had gone to live in Sodom. Well, Lot got carried away. Now, news of this reached Abraham at Mamre. Abraham lived up further north near Hebron, and Abraham decided to get some forces together and chase Chedorlaomer and these other kings. So he did, and he overtook them at Damascus, launched a surprise attack, and they fled, leaving all the captives and all the spoil; and you can't really get a better deal than that.

So Abraham gathered up all the captives and all the spoil, and he took off for home. Well, on the way, he ran into the king of Sodom, who was rejoicing over what had happened; and he said to Abraham, in effect, "You oughta keep all the spoil for what you've done," and Abraham said no, because Abraham had promised the Lord that he wouldn't do such a thing, so he didn't.

Now, immediately before Abraham ran into the king of Sodom, he met this man, Melchizedek, who was the king of another little area called Salem. We'll say more about that in a minute. And this guy was not only the king, but he was the priest of the Most High God; and when he met Abraham, he blessed him, and then Abraham took of the spoils and paid it to Melchizedek, and then he fades away, and that's all we ever hear...

You say, "Well, I don't understand what's so significant about this guy." Well, that's what we're gonna see. Now, I want to illustrate this to you if I might. On the left-hand of the screen is Aaron's priesthood. On the right-hand is Melchizedek's priesthood. Now, Aaron's priesthood was national to begin with. In other words, it was strictly Judaistic. The priests that were under Aaron were priests of Israel. Secondly, the priests were subject to the kings in a measure. They were not kings themselves. They were subjects in a kingdom. Thirdly, Aaron's priesthood offered no permanent

righteousness in peace. Only that continual, continual, continual sacrificing, nothing ever permanent. It never established a permanent righteousness for a man nor permanent peace with God. That peace and that righteousness were shattered every time they sinned. Constant repetition.

Fourthly, Aaron's priesthood was hereditary. It didn't matter how good of a guy you were. If you were born in the right family, you were automatically a priest, no matter what you were. Now that poses some problems, obviously. Fifthly, it was a timed priesthood. They only existed in it from the year...from the age of about 25 to 50, and it was over. It was limited by time. So Aaron's priesthood was a national one subject to kings, no permanent righteousness in peace, hereditary, and limited by time. Now, this is very important for us to understand because Melchizedek's priesthood supersedes Aaron's in every single point. "Therefore," says the Holy Spirit, "Christ is a better priest than Aaron."

You say, "So what?" So to the Jew that means a lot, because if Christ is a greater priest than Aaron, then they need to turn to Christ. Then the new covenant is better than the old covenant, and that's the whole point. God is trying to reach Israel, trying to get Israel to turn from Judaism to Christ and Christianity. So it's important they understand that Christianity is superior in its priesthood...

Now, we'll take these one by one. These five areas are given to us right here in verses 1 to 3, and we see the comparison with Melchizedek. The first one is this, Melchizedek's priesthood was universal. It was not national. It was universal. Notice verse 1, "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God." Now, this is a rich concept; and we could easily pass it by; but lemme give it to you. Stay with me. In relation to Israel, God took the name of Jehovah. If I had a little pencil here, I'd diagram it for you. God's name is I Am, right? Yahweh in the Hebrew, but no Jew would say the name of God; and so, since the Jews didn't wanna say the name Jehovah, they took the consonants of Jehovah and the vowels out of Adonai which means Lord, and stuck 'em together and got Yehowah, which is Jehovah. So Jehovah's not really the name of God. It's only that name which Israel came up with in an effort not to say Yahweh, and yet express who they wanted to express. So it's a combination word, Jehovah, and it deals strictly with Israel; and watch this. Aaron's priests were priests of Jehovah.

You remember that all the line of Aaron, the Levite line of Aaron were...and, incidentally, within the line of the Levites, you still had to be a son of Aaron; but all of those who came from Aaron were priests only of Jehovah. That is, they were related to God only in connection with Israel. They couldn't run over here and minister over there and there and everywhere else. They were tied to Israel's economy...but, watch this, it does not say that Melchizedek was the priest of Jehovah. It says he was the priest of what? The Most High God. Now, that is a universal name for God, El Elyon; and it reaches everywhere and everything in heaven and earth. It is the universal name of God that includes Jew and Gentile - far broader than the Jewish term Jehovah.

So whereas Aaron's priesthood related just to Israel, Melchizedek's was broader than that and related to all men. Now, when the Holy Spirit says Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, do you see the significance? The significance is this. Jesus is not just the Messiah of Israel, but of the world; so it is very important to establish Melchizedek's priesthood as universal if you're going to say Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, you see, the Jew, in the Jewish mind, there had to be historical reason for everything or a historical foundation; so God chooses Melchizedek as His perfect foundation to teach this truth. There have been priests who've been broader than Israel before. There's no reason to believe there can't be some more, and there is one, Jesus Christ. So it transcends Israel.

Now, Abraham understood this concept, because in Genesis 14:22, he said, in response to Melchizedek, "I have lifted up my head unto Jehovah...and then he said comma...God Most High." See he understood Jehovah in the covenant relationship. He also understood Jehovah in the sense that He was God of everything. In Deuteronomy 32:8 and 9, we read this. "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. For Jehovah's portion is His people." You see? The Most High God deals with the nations, but Jehovah's portion is Israel. You see? Jehovah is a covenant name for God dealing with Israel.

Aaron's priesthood dealt in the covenant with Israel. Melchizedek's was broader than that, for Israel had not yet been spawned from the loins of Abraham; and so his priesthood was broad.

In Daniel, for example, where the first great king of the Gentiles, Nebuchadnezzar, is brought through seven years of humbling until he finally acknowledges the facts of God. He says this. He knew that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "The Most High doeth according to His will in heaven and in earth." And here was a Gentile acknowledging the Most High. That's a term that has reference to Gentiles. That's a broad term for God; and you'll remember that even the demons, when our Lord cast them out, cried, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High God?" And they, again, used the universal term for God.

In fact, Jesus says, for those of us who come into His relationship, He promised that we shall be called the sons of the Most High; and so the term the Most High is then a universal name for God in...in the sense of His universal rule and character as it involves all men; and this means that Melchizedek's priesthood is not limited to a nation. He is not just priest of Jehovah. He is priest of the Most High God, El Elyon, possessor of heaven and earth, above all national, and above all dispensational distinction...

Now, you see, this is very important, my friends, because Judaism was a closed system; and they didn't really seek converts. Remember Jonah? The most horrible thing that ever happened to him

after his short ride on a long fish was the fact that Nineveh repented; and after Nineveh repented, he went out and said, "God, I'd rather be dead than have Gentiles horning in on my God." Was a very closed system and had no room for Gentiles. Today, there are 14 million Jews in the world, and I heard one rabbi say, "We don't want any more, either. We're not interested in proselyting anybody." They're locked in to their system, not by the design of God, but by their own failure to be the witness God intended them to be; and so their own Messiah is not even their own, but a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

And this, I think, is illustrated in what - 1 John 2:2, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but...what?...for the sins of the whole world." Certainly, we understand that. "He's the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," John 1:29. I'm thinking of John 4:42, isn't it, that said similar things. Yes, "And we know that this is indeed the Christ...these are the Samaritans talking...the Savior of the world." So we see that Jesus Christ is not just limited to Israel, but He is the redeemer of all men who ever call upon Him. So all of Israel's priests then ministered in a national sense, but Jesus is superior to them, because He ministers in a universal sense to all men, and the pattern is Melchizedek. Do you see how graphically Melchizedek illustrates?

Secondly, Aaron's priesthood was subject to royalty. Melchizedek's was royalty. Notice verse 1, "For this Melchizedek...what's the next word?...king of Salem." Four times it says he was king. In verse 2, it says, "king of righteousness, king...king of Salem, which is king of peace." Four times in two verses it tells us this man was a king. Royal priesthood. Melchizedek's was royal. This is something totally foreign to the Aaronic priests. This is totally foreign to the Levitical priests in Israel. There was never that combination. Israel's priests were never king and priests. That was unknown in Israel. No priest was royal, but, oh, my, what a perfect blend it is. What an absolutely perfect blend, that the true priest, the great priest, the glorious priest, Jesus Christ, should be that blend of priest and king, so that He not only takes men to God, but he rules men for God.

Listen to Zechariah 6:13, "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne." There He is as a king. "And He shall be a priest upon His throne." Now, that is an unheard of concept; and yet it is prophesied in Zechariah so clearly. Jesus was to be a priest, but a priest on a throne, a royal priesthood...In fact, if you look at chapter 7 verse 26, when he gets into talking about Jesus, later in the chapter he says, "For such an High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners...and here's His royalty...made higher than the heavens." Supreme royalty. King of kings, Lord of lords.

Now, you'll notice that it says he's king of Salem. You say, "Where's that?" Well, likely that's an ancient name for Jerusalem. Jerusalem also had the name Jebus, J E B U S, the Jebusites occupied Jerusalem initially; but it may have also, at the time of Melchizedek, had the name of Salem; and so Melchizedek could well have been an ancient king of Jerusalem. I think that has the best evidence. The city that was the hometown of God. There's a most wonderful statement about that in Psalm

132. I'll take a minute to read you two verses there. Psalm 132:13, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion...that's Jerusalem...He hath desired it for His habitation: 'This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.'" You didn't know God had a hometown, did you? His hometown is Jerusalem; and it seems to me that it would be very likely that God would've had His priest in His hometown even pre-Abraham. So Jerusalem had a king long before David, and a king appointed by God, and a priest long before Aaron, and a priest appointed by God. Melchizedek was king and priest of Jerusalem...

Now, this is important. The Jews always felt that God dealt with them, and that was about it, that God was exclusively theirs; and there could never be another priesthood; and there could never be another covenant; and so when Christianity came along and said, "Here's another covenant. Here's another priesthood," they said, "No, it can't be." Now watch this. Beautiful, beautiful argument by the Spirit. "Look," He says, "there was another priest, and there was another covenant before you existed. Why can't there be one after?" You see?

The whole world didn't begin with Judaism. There was something going on before God worked that way. There can be something on...going on after He's finished, or temporarily finished working that way. Oh, this is so important. It leaves room for the new covenant; for if God dealt differently before, why can't He deal differently again? He didn't need to work through the nation Israel before Abraham. Why can't He work another way if He wants to in this economy? That's the point. If He had a royal priest one time, why can't He have another one? And He does, and who is it? Jesus Christ, something no Jewish priest ever conceived of.

There's a third thing. There was no permanent righteousness, and there was no permanent peace in their Aaron's priesthood. Ah, but Melchizedek's priesthood was a priesthood of righteousness and peace. Notice verse 2, first, and we'll skip the first phrase, come back to it later. "First being by interpretation 'king of righteousness.'" And that's a translation of Melchizedek. That's what his name means, king of righteousness. "And after that also king of Salem, which is 'king of peace.'" Salem from Shalom, which means peace. His name is righteousness. His city is peace. He is a perfect combination of righteousness and peace.

Now, don't you know that that's exactly what all priests attempt to accomplish? What is righteousness? Righteousness is holiness, and righteousness is demanded before you can ever be at peace with God, right? God hates sin; therefore, if you're a sinner, you and God are not at peace, right? God fights against His enemies. Did you know that? God fights against His enemies; and if a man is not righteous, then he's not at peace with God; but the...if a man is righteous in the eyes of God, then he's not at war with God. He's at peace with God, right?

Now, Romans chapter 3, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ gave us His righteousness and, therefore, it says in chapter 5, "We have peace with God." You say, "Well, how do you get

righteous?" When the righteousness of Christ is given to you by faith in Him. Christ's righteousness just becomes yours. You're immediately at peace with God. He sees you covered by the blood of Christ. Every priest wanted to make a man righteous that he might be at peace with God, but they couldn't do it. The blood of bulls and goats didn't do it. They had to do it over and over. It only lasted as long as a man didn't sin...But here he says, "Melchizedek's very name was righteousness, and his city was peace." Emphasizing that his was a kingdom and his was a priesthood of righteousness and peace.

Is that typical of Jesus Christ? Does Jesus Christ provide a permanent righteousness? Absolutely. What happens to a sinner after he comes to Jesus Christ, invites Him into his life and then sins? What happens? Does he have to go back and ask Jesus to come in again? No. His righteousness covers him forever. What happens once you've made peace with God? All of a sudden, do you turn into God's enemy again, and He's gonna destroy you? No...No. Jesus Christ secures righteousness and peace on a permanent basis.

The historical Melchizedek was probably a very righteous man and a very peaceful king, but the Holy Spirit is not here dealing with the personal characteristics of Melchizedek. He's only dealing with Melchizedek as a type of Christ, and He says that he was first righteousness and then peace. And may I say, they always come in that order. There's no peace with God unless there's righteousness...Bible says, "The Lord is our righteousness." Righteousness comes first, then peace.

I love that Psalm 85, which says, "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other in the Messiah." That was the promise. The two things that men wanted was a sense of righteousness before God and being at peace with God, and they kissed each other and became a reality in Messiah. Christ came to give us His righteousness, that we might be at peace with God; and the priests of Israel couldn't cut it. They couldn't do it.

Look at verse 27 of chapter 7. Here he's talking about Christ, "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice first for His own sin, then for His own sins and then for the sins of the people; for this He did...what's the next word?...once." That's the difference between the old and the new economy. One time. Later on in Hebrews, "By one offering, He sanctified forever. He perfected forever them that are sanctified."

So first comes righteousness, and then comes peace with God. Read it in Isaiah 32:17. It's right there. Christ came to give us His righteousness that we might be at peace with God; and it's in Him that righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and so what do we see in Melchizedek's priesthood is a picture of Christ, a universal priesthood, a royal priesthood, and a righteousness and peace priesthood.

Now, fourthly, Aaron's priesthood was hereditary. Christ's was personal. Oh, this is so important, and what a graphic thing we're gonna learn here. Since the beginning of God's dealing with Israel, the establishment of the Aaronic priesthood, heredity and genealogy was the key to the whole thing. God designed that, of all of the various tribes, those in the tribe of Levi would be the priests; and, more specifically, those who could trace their direct lineage to Aaron. So those men were called out to be priests. It had nothing to do with personal qualification. You could be a crumb and, if you were in the right line, you were in. It had nothing to do with personal quality. Had only to do with heredity and, with great care, oh, did they ever preserve their pedigrees.

Back in Ezra, I think it's chapter 2 where you have that illustration. Chapter 2 verse 61, "And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Hakkoz, the children of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, was called by their name. These sought their registration among those who were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore were they as polluted, put from the priesthood." In other words, if you couldn't verify the genealogy of yourself and your wife, you got shoved out of the priesthood. It had nothing to do with qualifications. It only had to do with heredity.

But the priesthood of Melchizedek had nothing to do with heredity, but with personal qualifications, thus is superior, because in the Aaronic priesthood, you got some bummers from time to time, obviously...Now, when you come to Melchizedek, look at verse 3. It says, "Without father, without mother, without descent." Does that mean the guy came from nowhere? Just God made him up in heaven and flopped him in the middle of the earth? No, it means in the record of Genesis, there is no indication of his genealogy. That is totally foreign to any Judaistic king, totally foreign to any Judaistic priest, who all base their rights on their genealogy.

Now keep in mind, here's a little thought. This is not a comparison between Melchizedek and Christ. Watch it. It is a comparison between the revelation about Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and Christ. We know that the guy had a mother and a father. We know that he had a descent, but it was unimportant, because he was chosen by God on the basis of personal quality. That's the point. So the revelation, which presents him as a type, leaves out that, because that's unimportant. Melchizedek has no genealogy in Scripture. He's without father, and he's without mother. Scripture is silent on this, and he appears, thus, as a perfect type of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, in terms of His priesthood, didn't even belong to the tribe of Levi. What tribe did he belong to? Judah. And in terms of the Levitical priesthood, He had no right to be a priest, and so He was a priest, not after the order of Aaron, but who? Melchizedek, who was chosen, not because of his heredity, but because of his what? His quality.

And so he is saying the...the beginning and the end of all God's dealings isn't with Israel. He dealt differently before, and he'll deal differently again...Now, this is unusual for a priest and a king not to have any genealogy, but that's how Christ is. As I said, the text isn't saying that he wasn't born and

didn't have parents. It's saying, in the revelation, this information is not given, because it's unimportant. He is not connected with any line. He has no recorded beginning. He has no recorded ending, in order that he might appear as a perfect illustration of Jesus Christ. In fact, the word without descent is two words in the Greek, ah genealitos, which means without a genealogy. He just has no descent, and that's a word, incidentally, that we never find in any other Greek writing, I think either biblically or classically. Very unusual word. The Holy Spirit may have even invented it here, because to the Greeks and the Jews, everybody had that. How could you say about anybody, "He was ah genealitos"? I mean that just doesn't work; but this priest, in the revelation of Scripture, had none; and Christ is that kind.

Now look at verse 3 again. It says this. "Having neither beginning of days nor end of life." You say, "Ha, that's carrying it a little far." No, what it means is in the revelation, in Genesis 14, there's no beginning or ending. He just appears as alive, and, as far as we know, he's eternal. Right? Scripture leaves out any other thing in order that he might appear that way. Now the Jewish priest would begin at the time of his...at the time when he was 25; and for five years, he would serve the other priests. Then when he hit 30, he could operate on his own. He would minister till he was 50, according to numbers 8:25, and then it was over.

But no such restriction is placed on Melchizedek. There is no record of his death and, incidentally, in numbers 20:22 and following, there's a very detailed record of Aaron's death. There is no record of Melchizedek's death; and so Melchizedek appears as one who doesn't need to follow the patterns of the Aaronic priesthood. He stands apart and is chosen by God purely on the basis of his quality; and I say to you - the same thing is true of Jesus Christ, who was not chosen to be a priest because genealogy, but because of quality.

Look at verse 15 of chapter 7, which, again, referring to Christ brings this point out. After the similitude in the middle of the verse of Melchizedek, "There ariseth another priest who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment." You see, not after a fleshly design, but because of an endless life. In other words, based, not only upon His eternity, but upon His personal quality, not on any legalism. Not on any set of laws. So Jesus is like Melchizedek, because His priesthood is personal.

Now, watch this, lastly, Aaron's priesthood, as I mentioned, was timed. Melchizedek's is eternal. Sorry you can't see that better than that. Melchizedek's priesthood is eternal. You say, "Well, you mean to say that Melchizedek lived forever?" No, I mean to say that there appears in the text no beginning and no end to it. Therefore, typically, he speaks of Jesus. It says, "Without beginning of days nor end of life, but is made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Chapter 5 verse 6, listen. "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Chapter 6 verse 20, "Made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Now, in view of the fact that there is no record of the death of Melchizedek, he appears as always alive in the text; and, therefore, a picture of Jesus Christ. And in chapter 7, it tells us that Jesus Christ is just such a high priest. Verse 24, "He hath an unchangeable priesthood." Verse 25, "He ever liveth to make intercession." That's what a high priest does.

You say, "Well, you know, but Melchizedek is so inferior. How can ever serve as a type?" God always uses an inferior to serve as a type. People say, "Are you sure that Melchizedek isn't really eternal?" No, because if Melchizedek was really eternal, he wouldn't be the type. He would be the reality. He's the picture. The...the picture of the landscape is not the landscape. It's a poor substitute. So the Holy Spirit then, in desiring to show Christ a priest greater than Aaron, shows a priesthood greater than the Aaronic priesthood, that of Melchizedek, and says that Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek. Not a...not a national priest, but universal. Not subject to kings, but a king Himself. Not unable to bring about righteousness and peace, but able to do it. Not because of heredity, but because of personal quality. Not timed or limited by time, but eternal and, thus, does Jesus Christ stand as a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, I want you to take note of just one thought, and we'll close this particular point. It says in verse 3 that Melchizedek, watch this, "was made like unto the Son of God." Now watch. It does not say that the Son of God was made like Melchizedek. Who came first? The Son of God. Melchizedek was made like the Son of God. He was not the Son of God. He was made like the Son of God. Jesus Christ was the original. Melchizedek was only the copy; and so the superiorities are presented.

Secondly, and just briefly, the superiorities are proven; and in this argument, which runs from verses 4 to 10, it's a lotta words, but it's basically a simple argument. We have the proof that, indeed, Melchizedek was superior to Aaron and Levi. Now this is tremendous. I want you to get this. You say, "Well, you're standing there saying he's better than Aaron and because of this, because of this, because of this. I'm not too sure we oughta acknowledge that. How do we know that? Prove it." So we're gonna prove it.

Point No. 1, Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek. Say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, look at verse 4. "Now consider how great this man was." Think about it. This guy was something. Why? "Whom, unto whom even the patriarch," patriarch from two Greek words, archase, first, patri, father. The first father. "Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." Now, he says, "Consider how great this man is. Abraham, No. 1 guy, you know, our father, Abraham, nobody's better than Abraham, and Abraham gave his tithes to this guy." That's a pretty heavy point. Pretty strong argument to show the superiority of Melchizedek.

Now back to verse 2, we saw that, didn't we? "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all." Now in this argument, the Holy Spirit shows that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, because He

wants to show that he was greater than Aaron and Levi. Now, the point being, that Abraham being...was better than Aaron and Levi. Therefore, if Melchizedek was better than Abraham, he was also better than Aaron and Levi. If he's better than Aaron and Levi, he's the mediator of a better covenant, and you oughta turn from Judaism and come to Christ. You see the argument?

Now bear with me for a minute. I know this is heavy, and your computers are rattling, but it's God's Word, and I cannot fail to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. I give it to you and trust the Spirit of God. Now watch this. It says that Abraham gave this guy a tenth of the spoils, akrofinian. Interesting word spoils. Comes from two words, akron, a word which means the highest point, and fis, which means a heap. The heap on the top. That's what the word means. Abraham gave him the heap on the top. You say, "What does that mean?" Of all the stuff he had, he gave Melchizedek the top stuff. He gave him the best. That's really what Old Testament tithing was all about.

You remember in the Book of Malachi which God got real angry with Israel, and said, "Why do you bring Me the lame and the halt?" They were supposed to make a sacrifice, so they brought the sick animals. God says, "I reject that. I reject that." Abraham gave him the top of the heap. The Greeks, after a victory, had a custom. They'd bring all the spoils that they'd won in the battle, and they'd dump them in a big pile, and the best was taken out of it and given to the gods...That's exactly what Abraham does. He doesn't just give him a little part of it. He gives him the top of the heap. The fact that Abraham gave to Melchizedek magnifies Melchizedek's greatness, for Abraham was the great father, the first father. Consider how great Melchizedek must have been.

Now, this would be a wonderful place to preach on tithing, except that I don't believe in tithing for the New Testament in terms of being locked into the system of tithing. If you wanna be technical about tithing, the Jew gave 33 1/3 percent every year. If you wanna tithe, then you feel free to do that. I want you to feel free. When you add together the tithe that the Jew gave, it was 10 percent of this and 10 percent of that, and every third year, 10 percent of another; and therefore added up to 33 1/3 percent of all that he possessed. But the principles are the same, beloved, and I share those with you.

Do you understand the principles of giving to God? Do you understand what it means to give Him the top of the heap? I mean when the month comes and the check is there and you start to write your checks, what comes first? What comes top of the heap? You say, "Well, I...I sometimes feel like I oughta give to the Lord. You know, and I operate on impulse." That's very bad. God does not wanna be responsive only to your whimsical generosity. For all the centuries of Israel's life, God set the pattern. In grace we're free from the law, but grace must require more than law...because our High Priest is so great, not because we feel so generous. Did you get that?

If Abraham gave the top of the heap to Melchizedek, what should we give to Jesus Christ? Some of us don't even give the tenth. Some of us don't even give the top of the heap. We give Him

whatever's left of the lame and whatever else. We're not giving to God because of a desire in our heart to be generous. We're giving to God because of the glory of who He is and to our Messiah because he's great, and He deserves all we have.

Verse 5, He goes on with this argument. "And verily, they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law - that is, of their own brethren, the other Jews - though they came out of the loins of Abraham." This is interesting. The point is, look at a couple of points here, it says, "Verily, they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of priesthood." Not all the sons of Levi received it. Only the ones who were line...lined up with Aaron. But they were allowed, by law, a commandment, to take tithes. It was a commandment-type of a deal. But in the case of Abraham, there wasn't even a commandment. I mean he just did it. It was a tribute to the greatness of Melchizedek.

You see, if it had been a result of Melchizedek saying, "You give me the top of the heap," then we might say, "That guy's not great. He's selfish." He says nothing. Abraham simply acknowledges his greatness and gives him the top of the heap. So the Levites exacted from the people by law. This man just by the personal quality of his life, set a demand on Abraham. Not by saying anything, but by being who he was; and Abraham knew that he was a priest of the Most High God and gave him the respect he deserved, as God's priest. So Melchizedek's greatness is shown then, because Abraham paid him tithes when he didn't have to, before there was any law about it.

Second principle, Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Now that's something. Lotta people have been blessed by Abraham, but this is the only one I've ever read about that blessed Abraham. Look at verse 6, "But he whose descent is not counted...That's Melchizedek...from them, received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises." This guy who doesn't even fit into anything chronological or genealogical, he blessed Abraham. Now look at verse 7, "And without any contradiction...you can't reverse this...the less is blessed of the better." Right?

In other words, Melchizedek must have been greater than Abraham, because he blessed Abraham. No, this is a fantastic argument. The principle is simply this. God operated in Melchizedek's life on the basis of personal qualification, and he was higher than Abraham in those qualifications. Therefore, he was chosen to bless Abraham. Don't you see what we're seeing here? If this man was greater than Abraham, then he was greater than anything that came from Abraham; and we'll see that in a moment.

And this is a principle. Lemme apply it today, and...and we'll be done in just a minute. Today, God works on the basis of a man's personal qualifications; and, in the church, He sets up teaching shepherds, Ephesians 4:11, and He sets up evangelists and ruling elders. Now, in James chapter 3 in verse 1, we are warned, "My brethren, be not many teachers knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation or the greater judgment." At the end of the Book of Hebrews, chapter 13 verse

17, "Obey them that have the rule over you. Submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you."

God set certain people in the church to rule...We don't want everybody to do that. That's the problem that Paul talked about when he says, "Those people are in trouble because they heap to themselves...what?...teachers." Too many teachers. Heaping it up, just teachers and teachers and more teachers, and some today have, you know, settled for an ecclesiastical socialism where anybody and everybody who wants to can stand up and say what they wanna say.

It was a young man that I heard about recently who started a church, and he felt that this is the way to go, and there shouldn't be any preaching. In fact, there are a lotta churches like that today. And began the church, and I think it lasted about six months and split into all kinds of pieces, everybody going their own direction. Not many teachers. We don't heap to ourselves teachers. We subject ourselves to those whom God has chosen who, according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:16 and 17, "Are worthy of double honor if they rule well, especially if they labor in the Word and doctrine."

So God has set certain people in this economy of grace on the basis of special personal qualifications. If you're faithful over little...what?...he'll make you lord over much. You see, when you meet the qualifications, God'll lift you to the ministry; and so Melchizedek was like that. He was qualified to be what he was personally...not from heredity. He was superior and, therefore, he blessed Abraham.

There's a third argument that He gives here, and that is that because all priests were in the loins of Abraham at that time, he is therefore greater than all priests. Look at verse 8. "And here men that die receive tithes." You know, Melchizedek was of an eternal priesthood in the type. Christ is an eternal priest, and if we tithe to priests that die, "But where he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." In other words, to be able to exact tithes in a dying kind of priesthood is one thing. How much greater, Melchizedek had no death, and so Jesus Christ is a priest who is alive forever more. "He receiveth them of whom it is witnessed he liveth."

So he is a greater priest, because he's a living priest, not a dying one. All men are dying men. The idea that it says in verse 8, "Here men that die," is the...the Greek is here dying men receive tithes, but this is one who is alive forever more. And then comes this interesting argument in verse 9. "And, as I may say," in other words, he kind of apologizes for the strangeness of the argument; nevertheless, it's valid. "And, as I may say so, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him." The only one argument that would be left would be this. The Jew would say, "Now wait a minute. Now lemme think this thing through. Melchizedek, yes, Abraham paid him tithes; but Abraham was no priest. Right? Therefore, the Levites were priests, and maybe they were greater than Abraham, and maybe, if Abraham had been a priest, he wouldn't have done that." Maybe the Levites wouldn't have done it, and so he says,

"Levi also, who receives tithes, paid them in the loins of Abraham."

Now, this is an interesting argument, and you've got to understand the Jewish mind. The Jews viewed heredity in a realistic manner. Levi was in the loins of Abraham since he was to descend from Abraham. When Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, it was as if the entire Levitical priesthood had acknowledged his superiority. So that answers the last objection. Melchizedek then is better than Aaron. This is a powerful point to the Jewish mind, and...and, in a sense, I apologize to you and to me, even, because without a Jewish frame of reference, this is difficult for us to understand; but Melchizedek was of a better priesthood. Jesus came after the order of Melchizedek. Don't you see that He couldn't just invent a new priesthood without a historical precedent, or they wouldn't have bought it; and so God had designed this encounter with Melchizedek so that, at this point, when you witnessed to Israel, you can say, "Go back and your own father paid tithes to a better priesthood." If God did it then, why can't He have one now? And that one was only a picture of this one.

So Christ is a priest of a better priesthood. Universal, royal, bringing about righteousness and peace, personal, and eternal. Because of that, I close with these words. Let the Spirit penetrate your heart with them. You've heard them before, but listen. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank You for our study tonight. Oh, Lord, we know this has been difficult for our minds to comprehend in many ways. Father, may we not overcomplicate it. May we realize that these Jews who heard this message, who read it...had less frame of reference in Christian...to Christian theology than we do...and that Paul, in his writing, even to the Romans, acknowledges certain ignorance. That John in writing the Revelation acknowledges that these things are hard to understand and hard to bear; and here the Holy Spirit, in writing the Book of Hebrews, says essentially the same thing. I know these are difficult truths. But, Father, as we have feasted on the meat of the Word, we pray that it might penetrate us. May we see just another beautiful, glorious picture of Jesus Christ. May we have gained some fuel to burn within us to light a fire that might be a witness to Israel. God, we in this church here right...right in this location, live in the midst of a Jewish population all about us...Father, how strategic it is to learn the truths of the Book of Hebrews that we might open it up to teach them the truth about their Messiah. There is a better priest. There is a better sacrifice. There is a better covenant than Judaism, and it's all through Jesus Christ. Thank You for teaching us, Lord. Thank You for being our great High Priest, Lord Jesus, the One to whom we have come and found that mercy and that grace that promised us...Thank You for bringing us together tonight to learn these truths. Continue to teach us. Give us a hunger to know Your Word. Pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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