

*Melchizedec
And
Christ*



Bible study series

By

Victor A. Tawadrose

www.oasisoflivingwater.com

Melchizedec

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Melchizedec is a personality surrounded by mystery as we can see in what is recorded about him in Hebrews chapter 7.

Melchizedec was also mentioned in two other references in the Old Testament (Genesis 14:18-20 & Psalms 110:4), but what was written about him in these two references is not as much as it is in the epistle to the Hebrews.

Let us first see what is written about him in Genesis and the story behind it. If we read from the beginning of chapter 14, we find that a series of wars between few kings ended up by defeating the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and some of their people fell in the battle and the rest fled to the mountains (v.10); and the conquerors captured all their goods and provisions and went their way (v.11). They also captured Lot (Abram's nephew) and his family and his possessions (v.12).

One of those who fled came and informed Abram about what had happened. Then Abram armed his 318 trained servants, and went after them and brought back all the captives and their families and all their goods and possessions including Lot and his family (v. 14–16).

On his way back, Melchizedec the king of Salem and the priest of God Most High, went out to meet Abram and brought bread and wine, and blessed him. Then Abram gave him tithes of all (v.17–20).

This is all what is narrated about Melchizedec in the Genesis reference. As for what is written about him in Psalms 110:4 is not actually about him but it was a prophecy about Jesus Christ, and it reads ***“The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec”***.

Now let us see what is written about him in the epistle to the Hebrews; but before getting into that it may be beneficial to mention some important facts about the priesthood according to the order of Aaron. When we go back to the time when this order was established, we find that God commanded Moses, that the priesthood should run in Aaron and his descendants personally (Exod. 40:12-15), and not in the tribe of Levi generally although this tribe was consecrated wholly and totally for God's service. That is why this order of priesthood is known as the Aaronic or the Levitic priesthood. This command was observed literally in all the

ages of the nation of Israel, so much so that after returning from the Babylonian Captivity, the Temple records were lost and some genuine descendants of Aaron were not accepted as priests because they were unable to prove their ancestry.

That is why the children of Israel were very keen to keep records of their ancestry and genealogy.

Now when we read in the epistle to the Hebrews we notice that the writer is very particular about the fact that Melchizedec had no father and no mother nor did he have a known genealogy, with no known beginning of days or end of life (v. 3).

This is very strange because Melchizedec was a king and a priest; and it is impossible for a king who is a priest at the same time, not to be known from where he came, much less his father and his mother and from which family he descended. As a matter of fact he was the king of the Jebusites, one of the kingdoms of the land of Canaan at the time of the above mentioned encounter, and their city was Ur-Jebus (Judges 19:10; Josh.18:16,28; 2nd Sam.5:8; and 1st Chron. 11:4) which later became Ur-salem or Ur-shalom which later became Jerusalem. So obviously he had a family, a father, a mother and genealogy.

Then, what? Was the writer of Hebrews mistaken? Certainly not, he was not mistaken. We who are mistaken, because when we read Hebrews 7, the first impression we get is that the writer is trying to prove similarity between the person of Jesus Christ and the person of Melchizedec.

But this is not so, because Jesus had a mother and He is the Son of God and we know His lineage and genealogy according to Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. So, it is wrong to think that the writer was comparing their persons, but in fact he was comparing their Priest-hood, and that is where the similarity exists, because neither of them was Aaron's descendant, neither of them had a pedigree leading to a trail of priesthood, neither of them had a beginning nor end to his priesthood, while the Aaronic priest hood had a beginning by God's command to Moses (Exod. 40:12-15), and an end by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and abolishing the sacrificial system which was the backbone of the Aaronic Priest-hood.

Something else we should not neglect to mention, that the worshipping of the Aaronic priesthood was based on animal sacrifice while in the case of Melchizedec it was based on bread and wine, and in this he is similar to Christ who in the night of His betrayal, offered bread and wine to His disciples (although the Passover lamb must have been on the table as God's command in Exod. 12:1, 2, 14, 42) as a symbol to His body and blood, a final and ultimate sacrifice for humanity.

Now after this exposition, we should start from the beginning in chronological order.

We Christians believe that before creation of the world, God foreknowing that Adam will fall into sin, prepared salvation. So the Trinity agreed that this salvation will be through the incarnated Logos to restore the Holiness of creation to what it was before it was corrupted by Adam's sin.

To whom else outside the trinity would God reveal this mystery, except to a friend? So in due time, He declared it in His own way to Abram to whom the Holy Scripture has witnessed that he is the friend of God (2nd Chron. 20:7; Is. 41:8; James 2:23), though not quite clear but in a glimpse through his encounter with Melchizedec.

Then when time had come to announce it to His people, He introduced it in the shape of the Aaronic sacrificial priesthood as a shadow of what yet to come.

And as time passed and getting nearer to the actual revelation in the Person of His incarnated Logos, He made it in a prophecy to be added to the rest of the prophecies about the Messiah to come, and linked it to the Priesthood of Melchizedec which is far superior to that of Aaron since it is a Royal Priesthood, because he was a king and a priest. And who would be more appropriate than Christ who is also a King and Priest? So God inspired David to record this prophecy about the incarnated Logos: ***"The Lord sworn and will not relent, You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec"*** (Ps. 110:4).

Then we come to the big question: **"Should Christ be a priest? And why?"**

Being a king is understandable because He is the born king of the Jews, the Son of God, and listen to what the wise men from the east said inquiring "Where is He Who has been born **King** of the Jews?" (Mat. 2:2).

But the question is that he is from the Tribe of Judah (a Royal tribe), and not a Levite. This brings us back to the two questions above, and the answer is

Yes, He should be a priest. **Because** He is going to offer Himself as a sacrifice and this is the job of the priest. So He must be a Priest. But why not according to the order of Aaron? Because the Aaronic priest is ordained to offer animal sacrifices, and the sacrifice at hand is not animal but Royal. So the priest who is to perform the offering must be fit for this Royal task, and who could fit more than a king and a priest? That is why God has ordained His Son a King and Priest from **eternity** after the **Royal** order of Melchizedec and not after the order of Aaron because it is a human priesthood **created** and not **eternal**.