



## Genesis 14:18 20

### Priest of the Order of Melchizedek

A strange Priest King of Salem by the name of Melchizedek met Abraham after he fought with kings in the valley to rescue his nephew Lot.

Salem is called Jerusalem in latter days in the Old Testament. The old name Salem is referred to in the Psalms and means, "founding of peace," or "possession of peace," "the peaceful," hence "city of peace."

All that we know about Melchizedek is found in Genesis 14:18-20.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said,

'Blessed be Abram of God Most High,  
Possessor of heaven and earth;  
And blessed be God Most High,  
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.'

He [Abraham] gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of all" (Genesis 14:18 20).

### TWO GREAT MEN

Melchizedek brought bread and wine from Salem to supply the exhausted warrior. For obtaining peace, freedom and prosperity for him Melchizedek expressed his gratitude to Abraham. "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, the founder of heaven and earth: and blessed be God, the Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

Abraham reciprocated this priestly blessing by giving to Melchizedek a tenth of all of the booty taken from the enemies. By giving the tenth, Abraham acknowledged the divine priesthood of Melchizedek whose God reaches beyond a local deity; He is the "Most High God, founder of heaven and earth," the God of "all the families of the earth."

Keep in mind Abraham would not keep the property belonging to the king of Sodom because he would have nothing in common with him. However, he accepted from the king of Salem not only bread and wine for the invigoration of the exhausted warriors, but a priestly blessing as well. In return, he gave a tenth of all his booty. This was a definite sign that Abraham

return, he gave a tenth of all his booty. This was a definite sign that Abraham recognized Melchizedek's God and submitted to the royal priesthood of Melchizedek.

Moreover, this self-subordination to Melchizedek was the practical benediction of a royal priesthood that is higher than the priesthood entrusted to Abraham's descendants who would come many years later.

Melchizedek's name means, "king of righteousness." No doubt, he was a king who ruled his people in righteousness. He was characterized by righteousness, and is an appropriate type of our everlasting Savior and High Priest.

## **ONE GREAT KING-PRIEST**

Jesus Christ is forever a priest in the order of Melchizedek. What makes the order of Melchizedek superior to the order of Aaron? Jesus is preeminently the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace who is also a High Priest of the God Most High.

Melchizedek provided a type of Christ whose person and work accomplishes true righteousness and peace. Christ is "the Holy and Righteous One" (Acts 3:14). Christ satisfied the righteousness of God as our substitute, and provides peace with God for all believers (Rom. 5:1; 8:1).

Our Lord Jesus Christ "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20). By faith in Him we are pronounced righteous. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1; cf. 3:21-26). Paul goes on to say, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). The Hebrew prophet Jeremiah said of Him, "He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

Moreover, Melchizedek is also described in the Scriptures as having no known genealogy. There is no account of his descent, or of the beginning and end of his life. He is "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Hebrews 7:3). Melchizedek simply appears for a moment in time, then vanishes from our sight, never mentioned again for another thousand years until King David writes Psalm 110:4. Then he is not mentioned for another thousand years until the writer of Hebrews picks up his pen.

Please remember that *it is not the type that determines the antitype, but the antitype determines the type*. Jesus is not portrayed after the pattern of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek is "made like unto the Son of God" (Heb. 7:3).

The historical account in Genesis 14:18-20 depicts Melchizedek as a royal priest reigning in the city of Salem, known later as Jerusalem. Of interest to Bible scholars is the fact that the book of Genesis is filled with

genealogies, whereas Melchizedek, in spite of his importance, has no record. He simply appears for a moment, then vanishes from sight. He is described in Genesis as being "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." This is what makes him an excellent type of our ever-living Savior and High Priest.

This does not mean that he was a biological abnormality or even an angel in human appearance. The important thing is the account given of Melchizedek in the Scriptures and what is not said in silence. The silences of Scripture were as much due to the divine inspiration as were its statements. Melchizedek appears as a living man, king of Salem and priest of God Most High. Then he disappears.

In the record of his life Melchizedek is indeed an appropriate type of Christ as the eternal Son of God who has neither beginning of days nor end of life. As the king of righteousness He is exalted at the right hand of God the Father. As our great high priest He abides a priest continually. The type Melchizedek remains a priest continually for the duration of his appearance in Genesis, but his antitype remains a priest continually without conditions or limitations upon Him. The antitype Jesus Christ is our eternal high priest without any qualifications whatsoever.

Some scholars see this passage as a Christophany, the pre-incarnate appearance to Abraham by the second person of the God head. But Melchizedek loses the typology when you interpret him as a Christophany. It is best to interpret one or the other and the evidence all tends toward a type. There is probably no reason to interpret Melchizedek as a supernatural, mysterious personage.

In His eternal being the Son of God has reality, as Melchizedek has typically, "neither beginning of days nor end of life." He is exalted at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He "abides a priest continually." Melchizedek remained a priest continually for the duration of his appearance in the biblical narrative. However, the antitype Jesus Christ remains a priest continually without qualification forever.

The divine commentary on this great passage in Genesis makes it very clear that Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest of whom Melchizedek was a type. Hebrews chapters five through ten explains how the priesthood of Jesus is superior to Aaron and the Levites. The whole emphasis of Hebrews is on a better priest, a better covenant, a better sanctuary, a better sacrifice and consequently better promises. Jesus is acclaimed the perpetual High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek."

Now, if Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, his priesthood must be greater than a priesthood, which traces its descent from Abraham. Abraham recognized Melchizedek's superiority by giving Melchizedek tithes and receiving his blessings. The priesthood of Melchizedek enjoys higher status than the Levitical priesthood in Hebrews. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, not from Levi. He could never serve as a Levitical priest. Moreover, no Levite could ever serve as the Messiah King.

The perpetual priesthood of the Messiah was confirmed by a divine oath: "The LORD has sworn, and will not change His mind: Thou art a priest forever." The order of Levi had many priests in number, because they continued to die off. "The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:23-25). Jesus' eternal priesthood is similar to Melchizedek who had no descendants, and there were no priests to follow him.

## **ONE PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR SIN**

Moreover, our Great High Priest "does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for

Moreover, our Great High Priest "does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (vv. 27 28). He is the Great High Priest who voluntarily offered up the perfect sinless sacrifice of Himself as a substitute for sinful people.

It took the death of the Son of God to make a true atonement for sin. The Levitical animal sacrifices could not make real atonement for sin, since the death of animals is inadequate. They taught the way of salvation through the death of an innocent victim, but that victim had not yet arrived and would not until the coming of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the perfect High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice--Himself--that takes away sins and guilt. The sacrifice made by Jesus was perfect. It actually paid the price for sin. The sacrifice of Jesus was complete and eternal.

Generation after generation of High Priest's of Israel died and the office passed to another until in all, Josephus reckons that 83 high priests officiated from Aaron to the fall of the Second Temple in A. D. 70. However, the priesthood that Jesus Christ holds is perpetual, because "He remains forever." Our eternal High Priest Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father ever ready to make intercession for us today. He will never have to hand it over to someone else. Those who have Him as their high priest and mediator with God have in Him a savior whose saving power is available without end. He lives eternally always engaged to bless and protect those who have put their eternal trust in Him.

The way of approach to God through Jesus Christ is always open, because He is forever in the presence of God. He represents His people forever. He is living to plead your case before the Father in heaven right now. He is willing to be your merciful and faithful high priest. Call upon His name and He will save you.

Jesus is not only our Great High Priest, but He is also the Divine Melchizedek, King of Righteousness and King of Peace. Oh come and worship Him who is the sovereign king whose "name is above every name." "For this reason also," writes the Apostle Paul, "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 1:9 H).

In noble form this priest king was a type of the God King and eternal high priest Jesus Christ. It was King David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who spoke prophetically regarding the coming Messiah, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'" (Psalm 110:4). David wrote these words a thousand years after Melchizedek lived and served as priest of the Most High God. David declared that the ultimate priest should be one like Melchizedek, without father, without mother, without genealogy.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, was after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:5 6, 10; 6:19 20; 7:1 3, 17, 20 28; 8:1 6, etc., etc). The Son of God entered within the veil as a forerunner, and there abides, exercising His priestly function. All of the mystical qualities revealed in the historic account of this priestly king came to their ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

In the person of Jesus Christ, the Son God and our blessed Savior,

Lovingkindness and truth have met together;  
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Psalm 85:10).

But please keep in mind that it is not enough that Jesus came and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. We must appropriate that sacrifice by faith in Him. Salvation is not automatic just because Christ died for us. It is a free gift, paid in full by His death on our behalf, but we must receive it by faith. "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard" (Hebrews 2:3). "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus today; ask Him to be your savior. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved. "

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