

**"Our Great High Priest"**

**Part 20**

**Hebrews 4:14-8:5**

**Introduction:** Tonight in our study of Hebrews we are again coming back to chapter 7 and we are looking at a man by the name of Melchisedec. He is a man who is mentioned in the Old Testament but he is only mentioned in a couple of verses.

**Genesis 14:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.*

<sup>19</sup> *And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:*

<sup>20</sup> *And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

**Psalm 110:4**

<sup>4</sup> *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

These are the only Old Testament references which we have of the man Melchisedec. In Hebrews 7 the writer of Hebrews holds Melchisedec up as a type of Jesus Christ in order to show his readers that the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood.

As we look at this section of Hebrews 7 we must keep in mind the importance of the Levitical priesthood in the life of the Hebrew. They were grounded in the Levitical priesthood from the day they were born. They understood that without a high priest there was no way for the common man to have access into the presence of God. Last week I told you that the Latin word for priest means "bridge builder". That is exactly what the priest was. He was a man who built a bridge into the presence of God. So when these Hebrews came to Jesus Christ and were saved they needed to know that Jesus now served as their Great High Priest. But to them the Levitical priesthood was the only priesthood which could provide them with access to God. They did not understand that the Levitical priesthood was imperfect. There was a Priesthood that far exceeded the Levitical priesthood. Under the Levitical priesthood the sacrifices had to be offered on a continual

basis. The Priesthood of Jesus was superior in that Jesus offered one sacrifice of His own life and with that one sacrifice believers are perfected FOREVER.

**Hebrews 10:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:*

<sup>12</sup> *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

<sup>13</sup> *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

<sup>14</sup> *For by one offering **he hath perfected for ever** them that are sanctified.*

This is great news but with the Hebrews there would have been a question. "How did Jesus qualify to be a High Priest when He was not of the tribe of Levi and even more specifically He was not of the family of Aaron?"

That answer to that question is found in Hebrews 7. The writer is explaining to his readers that Jesus is a High Priest NOT after the order of Aaron but He is a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Last week we looked at several points about how Melchisedec is a TYPE/SHADOW of Jesus Christ.

1. **The priesthood of Melchisedec was a universal priesthood. The same is true of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.**

This makes the Priesthood of Jesus Christ superior to the Levitical priesthood because the Levitical priesthood was only a "National" priesthood and by that I mean that the Levitical priests were "bridge builders" for the nation of Israel. But Jesus is a High Priest for anyone who is willing to come to Him.

2. **Melchisedec was both a king and a priest. The same is true of Jesus Christ.**

Under Israel's economy the priests came from the family of Aaron and the kings came from the family of David. Therefore no man could be both priest and king. But Jesus was both because he was a Priest after the order of Melchisedec and not after the Levitical system.

3. **Melchisedec was a king of righteousness and peace. Jesus Christ is also a King of righteousness and peace.**

The Levitical priesthood could not provide a lasting righteousness and peace. I want to take a moment and clarify something here. This does not mean the people of the Old

Testament lost their salvation every time they sinned. They were saved just as we are by GRACE through FAITH. They looked ahead to the cross and we look back to the cross. But every year they had bring a blood sacrifice which was evidence of their faith.

**Hebrews 9:22**

<sup>22</sup> *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

God required them to bring a sacrifice but the blood of the animal could not wash away their sins.

**Notice Hebrews 10:1-10**

Jesus did what the Levitical priests and the sacrificed animals could never do and that was His sacrifice took away our sins once and for all.

This now brings us to the next point.

**4. Melchisedec, IN TYPE, is seen as an eternal priest.**

**Notice Hebrews 7:3**

Here we see that Melchisedec was without father and without mother. He had neither a beginning of days nor an end of days. He was made like unto the Son of God and therefore is a priest continually.

Now we really need to slow down as we look at this verse to see what the writer is saying here. Let me first of all make something very clear and that is that Melchisedec was not the preincarnate Christ. In other words Melchisedec was not an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ. There are several of those in the Old Testament where Jesus appeared but this is not one of those. Let me show you a verse to make a point.

**Hebrews 5:1**

*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:*

The high priests were taken from among men so Melchisedec was a man and he was not the preincarnate Christ. With that said then we must ask what the writer is saying in Hebrews 7:3.

There are 2 ways to look at this verse and I want you to see both of the thoughts from what the writer is saying. First of all we must understand that the writer is pointing to Melchisedec as a TYPE of Jesus Christ in this verse.

When he tells us that Melchisedec was without father or mother he does not mean that he actually had no parents. He is stating that his parents are never mentioned in the Scriptures. When he says that he had no beginning of days nor end of life he is stating that there is no mention of his birth nor is there any mention of his death.

### Notice Hebrews 7:3

The end of this verse is the key to understanding the writer's point. Melchisedec was made like unto the Son of God. In other words in the Scriptures he APPEARS to be eternal. He APPEARS to have always existed and to never have died. So in this he is a wonderful TYPE of Jesus Christ because the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is an eternal Priesthood.

This makes the Priesthood of Jesus Christ superior to the priesthood of Aaron because those who served in Aaron's priesthood eventually died and when they did they were no longer priests.

### Hebrews 7:22-25

<sup>22</sup> *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

<sup>23</sup> *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:*

<sup>24</sup> *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

<sup>25</sup> *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

### 5. Melchisedec was chosen based on character and not by his genealogy

### Notice Hebrews 7:3

Now I want to show you the second thought which we can see in the mind of the writer as he presents this verse. The word "decent" here mean "genealogy". So the writer is saying here that there is no record of the genealogy of Melchisedec.

Now we are not Jewish so we could very easily miss the point here if we are not careful. Every Levitical priest had to be able to prove he was of the family of Aaron and if he could not then he did not qualify to serve in the priesthood. Let me show you how important the genealogy was under the Levitical system.

## 2 Chronicles 26:1-3

*Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.*

*<sup>2</sup> He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.*

*<sup>3</sup> Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.*

Here we are introduced to Uzziah's reign as king. It is important to notice that he was of the tribe of Judah and not the tribe of Levi. Uzziah was a man whom God used and that is seen throughout the chapter. Then we come to verse 16.

## 2 Chronicles 26:16-21

*<sup>16</sup> But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.*

*<sup>17</sup> And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:*

*<sup>18</sup> And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.*

*<sup>19</sup> Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.*

*<sup>20</sup> And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.*

*<sup>21</sup> And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death...*

When king Uzziah went into temple to burn incense he stepped over the line and when he was confronted by the priests they were quick to point out that he was NOT of the family of Aaron. So this gives us a glimpse of how important the genealogy of the priest was. Now the problem was that if a man could produce his genealogy and prove he was of the family of Aaron then he was able to step into the priesthood but just because he was of the family of Aaron did not always mean he was qualified. You see, the genealogy did not mean the man had a heart for God. Let me give you an example.

## 1 Samuel 1:3

<sup>3</sup> *And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.*

**1 Samuel 2:12-17**

<sup>12</sup> *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.*

<sup>13</sup> *And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;*

<sup>14</sup> *And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.*

<sup>15</sup> *Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.*

<sup>16</sup> *And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.*

<sup>17</sup> *Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.*

So we can see that just because a man was of the family of Aaron did not mean that his heart was right with God.

Let us get back to the thought in Hebrews 7:3 again. Melchisedec's genealogy is never mentioned and we know that he was not a descendant of Aaron because Aaron did not yet exist so what was it that qualified Melchisedec to be the priest of the most high God?

It was his character. His name means "king of righteousness". You see Melchisedec was a man after God's own heart. In the midst of a corrupt society Melchisedec determined that he would live to please God. He was not swayed by the sinfulness around him but instead he was controlled by the will of God.

This again makes Melchisedec a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. Let me show you just 2 verses to make the point.

**John 4:34**

<sup>34</sup> *Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

**John 6:38**

<sup>38</sup> *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

**Conclusion:**

Next week we will look at Hebrews 7:4-10. Before we end this study however let me apply this to our lives. Melchisedec was a type of Christ in many ways. One of the ways was that he separated himself from his society and lived for God. He desired to live in the will of God regardless of his surroundings. In this way he showed forth a picture of Jesus Christ.

This is the very opportunity which God has set before us in this sin filled world in which we live in. Let me leave you with the words of Paul in Romans 12.

**Romans 12:1-2**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*