

Hebrews - Chapter Seven

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Three times already in Hebrews it has been stated, *Jesus made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*. Now, in chapter seven, the writer begins to explain how Melchizedek was a type of Christ as the ultimate high Priest: **Heb 7:1-2: 1** *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem (a city), which is King of peace...* The name Melchizedek is derived from two words meaning ‘king of righteousness.’ According to Psalm 76:2, *Salem*, meaning ‘peace’, was another name for Jerusalem, which name means ‘city, or habitation of peace’, and both attributes fit Christ. Most interesting is the root of *Salem* ⁽⁸⁰⁰⁴⁾ which is *shalam* ⁽⁷⁹⁹⁹⁾, and carries the basic meaning of “to be whole, made complete, finished”, as in **Job 8:6: If you (are) pure and upright, surely now He would arise for you, and make complete the habitation of your righteousness.** (Bible Interlinear) Jerusalem is the habitation of Christ, and, understanding that a city is a figure of a mind-set, then, to be complete in Christ is to dwell in his habitation, or way of thinking, which brings peace.

The name of Melchizedek is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament (Ps 110:4; Gen 14:18), so, what is known from the Bible is limited to the context of those references and the ones in Hebrews. Melchizedek was one of the kings of Canaan and a contemporary of the other Amorite kings defeated by the Babylonia kings when Lot was taken captive. He is called a ‘priest of the most high God’ (Gen 15:18), and serves as an example of why God told Abram, when He promised him the land, that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (Gen 15:13-16). Note the following parallels between Melchizedek and Christ: (Other references can be found as you study)

Melchizedek	Christ
<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 14:18: Priest of the most high God	Ps 110:4; Heb 5:10; 6:20; Zech 6:12-13
<input type="checkbox"/> King of Salem (Jerusalem)	Ps 48:1-2; Jn 18:33, 37
<input type="checkbox"/> Brought forth bread & wine	Mt 26:26-28
<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 14:19: Blessed Abram	2 Cor 11:31 Blessed forever
<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 14:20: Praised the most high God	Jn 8:29; 14:31 Subject to the Father
<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 7:2: King of Righteousness	Jer 23:5-6 Prophecy of the Branch

Since we understand the nations of Canaan as spiritual types of our sin problems that need to be defeated, another consideration of Melchizedek, as a type of Christ, is that the nations were under his feet, i.e. God was his Ruler.

Tithes: **Mal 3:10: Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house...** Since we are the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16), I have always felt that spiritual tenths represented God’s understanding of the law. Individuals tithe when they acknowledge a person’s teaching as a blessing from God, and the literal financial support also manifests the same thing. Abram gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek when he brought forth ‘bread and wine’, thus acknowledging the blessing he received.

Without decent: **Heb 7:3: Without father, without mother, without genealogy** ⁽³⁵⁾, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life, and resembling* ⁽⁸⁷¹⁾ (as a type) *the Son of God, remains a priest continually.* (Bible Interlinear) The first key Greek word in this verse is *agenealogetos* ⁽³⁵⁾, meaning that there was not a record of Melchizedek’s birth, death, his biological parents nor anything about ancestors, whose descent was not reckoned to be from the Levites. Contrarily, Levites had to keep complete records of genealogy in order to prove they were eligible to be a priest. (cf Neh 7:63-64) Jesus, on the other hand, was from the tribe of Judah (verses 13-14), and therefore not eligible as a priest under the law, neither are there any birth records to date.

The next key Greek word is *aphomoioo* ⁽⁸⁷¹⁾, derived from Strong's numbers 575 = from & 3666 = illustrate by comparisons. There are those that believe Melchizedek was the incarnate Christ, But the word *aphomoioo* lends strength to the view that the author of Hebrews was comparing like characteristics between the two, much like David's kingship is also compared to Christ's (Jer 23:5; Hos 3:5), and Moses, as a prophet was compared to Jesus the prophet (Dt 18:17-18). Like David and Moses, Melchizedek was a type of Christ in some ways, and like all types, they teach us about the Father and Son.

An exchange made: Heb 7:11-12: *11. If therefore perfection were by means of the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12. For the priesthood being changed ⁽³³⁴⁶⁾, there is made of necessity a change ⁽³³³¹⁾ also of the law.* The meaning of the Greek word *metatithemi* ⁽³³⁴⁶⁾ is 'to transfer, transpose', and is the root of *metathesis* ⁽³³³¹⁾. To transpose something is to swap two things in position or place. Several Old Testament verses testify to the coming Messiah as a priest (Zech 6:12-13; Ps 110:4; Isa 9:6; 22:24), of which the writer of Hebrews states, *And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there arises another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life* (verses 15-16). Christ was made a priest by an oath (verse 21), and because he has an 'endless life' his priesthood is unchangeable (verse 24). Additionally, we are to become priests when made in the image of Christ (Ex 19:5-6; Rev 1:5-6). (A priest is a minister of God - Jer 33:21; Joel 1:9, 13)

The Levitical services are to be viewed as an allegory, a revelation of the process by which Christ and humanity become priests. This transfer for Christ culminated at the cross, and takes place for us individually as we receive the understanding of the cross. We are transposed from being 'under the law' (i.e. governed by the law) to being 'under the voice of Christ' (1 Jn 2:24-27, otherwise referred to as grace - Zech 12:10; Act 14:3; 20:32), and yet, using the written word for revelation via the Spirit. The old covenant was the letter of the same law (carnal commandment - verse 16) which governed the Levite priests, but under the new covenant, the spiritual understanding of the law is written in the heart as we hear and do God's instructions. Nothing of the law is abolished or destroyed (Mt 5:17-18), but we merely change the way we now look at and relate to the law.

Heb 7:18-19: *18 For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.* (American Standard) There is much study for a person to do regarding the law if they are to understand these verses, as well as verse 12 above. **2 Cor 3:6-8:** *6. Who also has made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills (the soul spiritually), but the spirit gives life* (cf Jn 6:63; Rom 8:2). *7. But if the ministration of death, in writing, having been engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 8. How shall not the ministration of the spirit be more glorious?* (Interlinear) Some, in error, assume the ten commandments, written in stone, were put away at the cross. But here Paul is writing of two laws: the letter of the law, as it is written, and the law of the spirit (cf Rom 8:2), as the spirit interprets the letter for us. Man's problem today is no different than Israel's when Paul wrote this - *when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart* (2 Cor 3:15). All the letter is still needed with the Spirit's guidance as to the spiritual understanding of it. **Col 1:9-10:** *9. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in [God's knowledge]...*

Here is another reference to two laws: **Rom 3:28-29, 31:** *27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works* ⁽²⁰⁴¹⁾? *Nay: but by the law of faith. 28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith*

without the deeds ⁽²⁰⁴¹⁾ *of the law... 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid (NO!): yea, we establish the law.* Here the 'laws of works' is contrasted with the 'law of faith.' The law of works is reading the Bible and doing what WE think it says, rather than to seek God's interpretation. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the spoken word of God, so, the law of faith (God's understanding) is established by listening to the spirit of Christ. When understood this way, there is no contradiction of scriptures pertaining to the law and covenants.

Heb 7:22, 25-27: *22. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better [covenant]... 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to [counsel in behalf of] them. 26. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27. Who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.* In the [] are words that better focus the meaning of what is being said. Jesus, as a minister of the new covenant, consults with the Father in our behalf, and as the Holy Spirit, brings to us an understanding of the written word to help us with our infirmities. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* (Jn 17:17)

Heb 7:28: *Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect* (Heb 5:8-9) *for ever.* (Revised Standard) The oath that came later has already been referenced several times in Hebrews: **Ps 110:4:** *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.* (Other verses were mentioned above) The Son of God had our nature and carried our weaknesses, yet without sinning. Therefore he established, forever, the way of salvation for all who are willing to follow him. Amen.