

Abraham & Melchizedek

by Wayne Goff

"The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'" ~ Psalm 110:4 [Hebrews 7:17]

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Historically, we read about Melchizedek in Genesis 14 when Abraham was returning from his defeat of area kings who had carried off his nephew, Lot. This event can be dated to around 2175 B.C.

Prior to this event, we know nothing of Melchizedek. We do not know his genealogy, we do not know when he was born nor when he died. So historically speaking, he had neither beginning of days nor end of life (Hebrews 7:3). These historical truths would be used by God in the New Testament *symbolically* to emphasize the greater priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 7 points out that Melchizedek was both king and priest of Salem (later known as Jerusalem). He was ordained by the Most High God, and Abraham paid tithes to him. The nation of Israel was, so to speak, still in the loins of Abraham when this was done. So the rightful conclusion is that Melchizedek was a greater high priest than anyone who might have descended from father Abraham. We know that the nation of Israel, and Levi in particular, submitted to Melchizedek and his priesthood through Abraham. Therefore, if anyone became priest *"after the order of Melchizedek,"* that high priest would be superior to anyone of the Jewish nation.

Jesus Christ

God prophesied through King David that One would come and be both king and priest like Melchizedek, Psalm 110:4. The Hebrew writer refers to this prophecy in Hebrews *repeatedly* to emphasize how much greater Jesus Christ was as King and High Priest than anyone else, including Abraham, Levi, and any other descendant (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10-11, 15, 17, 21). The nation of Israel should naturally believe in and submit to this new King and Priest!

The priesthood of Christ is greater than that of Levi because Jesus is **an eternal** high priest, never to be replaced. By the power of an endless life, He serves the needs of His people, Hebrews 5:6. What was *symbolically* true of Melchizedek is *literally* true of Jesus.

Jesus was **called by God**, just as Aaron was, Hebrews 5:10. Jesus is our **Forerunner** into heaven, having preceded us as the resurrected Lord, King and High Priest! (Heb. 6:20). We will go to heaven if we will follow Him! Jesus is greater than Abraham because of His Divine Nature, Divine Calling, and eternal High Priesthood, Heb. 7:10-11. And His priestly order was established by an irrevocable Divine oath, Heb. 7:21!

A Needed Change

Because the priesthood was changed by God, there must also of necessity be a change in the Law, for the Law of Moses only allowed for a Levitical priesthood, Heb. 7:12-14. Therefore, the Law of Moses was concluded, and all of its special favors and relationships between God and Israel. This was a difficult "pill to swallow" by the Jewish people. They had mistakenly thought that they would **forever** be God's special people above all nations. However, if they had considered the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ as a New Lawgiver (Deuteronomy 18), and as a new High Priest (Psalm 110:4), and the need for a new covenant which they had broken (Jeremiah 31:31-34), then they would not have been so surprised.

Through Jesus Christ we have eternal forgiveness, a spiritual nation comprised of those from every nation, a better covenant than the law, an unchangeable priesthood in Jesus Christ, and a "*perfected*" (completed) One as well, Hebrews 7:22-28. All of this was **foreordained** by God long before Israel became a nation, and it was foreshadowed by the man, Melchizedek. The honest Bible student can come to no other conclusion.