

## Melchizedek

**And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Genesis 14:18–20)**

Melchizedek (Gen 14:18), the most mysterious man in the Bible, appears in the *toledoth* (Hb.) of Terah (starting in Gen 11:27), in the story of father Abraham, out of nowhere. The reader has no knowledge of his ancestry – he has "neither beginning nor end of life" (Heb 7:3). Nothing is said about him before or after chapter 14 until Psalm 110:4 and then again in Hebrews 5-7. This priestly king appears after the battle where Abram rescued Lot with bread and wine (perhaps a feast) to celebrate and give the same God glory for the victory in battle. Melchizedek plainly states that God Most High "has handed over your enemies to you" (Gen 14:20). And Melchizedek pronounces a blessing upon Abram from God Most High at which point Abram gives a tenth of everything from the spoils of war to Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews makes much of the greatness of this priest and king since the patriarch Abram "gave a tenth of the plunder to him" (Heb 7:4). Nothing in the narrative of Genesis would indicate that Abram and Melchizedek knew each other before the battle or ever met again after this brief encounter. Two worshippers of the same God met in the middle of a hot afternoon in Canaan, celebrated the feast of the Lord's Supper together, worshipped, prayed, and departed, perhaps never to meet again until eternity.

### Melchizedek

- His name means king of righteousness (Heb 7:2)
- King of Salem (lit. "king of peace) (perhaps Jerusalem) (Psa 76:2)
- Priest of God Most High (Gen 14: 18, 19, 20)
- First person to be called a priest in the Bible
- Worshipped the same God as Abram, Yahweh, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth
- Perhaps a descendent of Shem, but nothing is said of his origin in the Bible

The student of the Bible does not understand Melchizedek's importance until the revelation of Jesus – the eternal Son of God, who is also both a priest and king. Jesus, the son of king David, the descendent of the tribe of Judah, and the son of Abraham cannot also be a descendent of Aaron, the first high priest, a descendent of the third son of Jacob – Levi. (Jesus cannot be the son of the 3rd and 4th son of Jacob.) Yet Jesus is as much a priest as he is a king. Priests offered sacrifices to God on behalf of their people for their sin. Jesus offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice – "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus's royal lineage came from king David and the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10), but what about Jesus priestly lineage – where did that come from? It could not come from Levi or Aaron. Those priests offered sacrifices that temporarily atoned for sin. But Jesus, the ultimate high priest (Heb 3:10) of the new covenant, needed a priestly lineage that was eternal and superior to Aaron's in every regard. Thus, God Most High orchestrated the introduction of this mysterious man, a priest and king, so that Jesus could be a king after the tribe of Judah and a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, priest of God Most High. If Aaron's priesthood could have perfected people, there would be no need for Jesus to be identified six different times as:

- Jesus, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Psa 110:4; Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:17)

Jesus the priest, who is also the king of righteousness, the king of peace, and the king of Jerusalem, is a priest forever after the order Melchizedek, and the ultimate sacrifice. Whereas the priests after Levi and Aaron only offered temporary animal sacrifices, and all died. Concerning the origin of Melchizedek, there are two possibilities:

- Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ; thus, Abram met Jesus
- The Holy Spirit intentionally omitted the details of his lineage (but he had one—perhaps Shem) to create the mystery and establish a foundation for Jesus' role as the high priest of the new covenant (Heb 9:15)