

## **THE GREATNESS OF MELCHIZEDEC (Hebrews 7:1-10)**

### **1. Who he was (Hebrews 7:1-3).**

- a. What our writer does is summarize what we read in Genesis 14 with some explanation.
- b. We learn that Melchizedec was a king and priest.
  - i. He was the king of Salem which would later be known as Jerusalem.
  - ii. He was a priest of God.
- c. The beginning of Genesis 14 contains an account of the battle of the kings.
  - i. Genesis 14:1-10.
  - ii. Abraham went after his nephew Lot and rescued he and his family and recovered all that the kings had taken.
- d. Upon Abraham's return, Melchizedec went out to meet and Abraham and bless him.
- e. Abraham then gave a 10<sup>th</sup> of the spoils to Melchizedek.
- f. We learn that his name means king of righteousness.
- g. We learn that he is the king of peace, the meaning of Salem.
- h. Our writer then gives us some interesting notes:
  - i. He was without father and mother.
  - ii. He had no lineage.
  - iii. He had no beginning or ending of life;
  - iv. He was like the Son of God, abiding a priest continually.
- i. There are some interesting ideas about who this man was:
  - i. Some believe he was an angel;
  - ii. Others believe he was Enoch;
  - iii. While others believe he was Shem.
- j. Because of what is said about him in verse 3, some believe he was a "Christophany", an appearance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Godhead on earth.
- k. The most common view of Melchizedec, and the one I believe, is that he was a type of Christ.
  - i. He is said to be the things in verse 3, not because he had no parents or descendants or lineage, but because none is listed.
  - ii. He is said to have no beginning or ending because neither is revealed to us.
  - iii. If any of these had been revealed to us, it would take away from his foreshadowing the coming Christ.

### **2. Melchizedek a type of Christ.**

- a. The word "Melchizedek" means "King of righteousness," thus the very name becomes a title of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. "King of Salem" means "King of peace," and thus the title of Melchizedek is another appropriate title of our Lord (Isaiah 9:6ff; Psalms 72:7).
- c. Melchizedek was both king and priest, a double dignity not enjoyed by any illustrious Hebrew, not even Moses, and startlingly typical of Jesus Christ who is both king and high priest.
- d. Melchizedek received tithes of Abraham, even as Christ receives gifts of them that love and follow him.
- e. He blessed Abraham; Christ blesses his followers.

f. Melchizedek's priesthood encompassed service to Gentiles and Jews alike, as witnessed by his reception of Abraham; and Christ likewise is the High Priest of all mankind, having no racial or other limitation.

### **3. Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.**

a. Having shown who this man was, the writer now tells his audience how this man was greater than Abraham.

i. To a Jew, Abraham was their father and the greatest man who ever lived.

ii. For this man to have been greater than Abraham would be hard for any Jew to swallow.

iii. The point of this section is to show that this man pointed to Jesus and the greater priesthood than what the Mosaic Law offered.

b. He had to be great because Abraham paid tithes to him.

i. The lesser always paid tithes to the greater.

ii. This was a sign of respect given to someone who holds a higher position or rank.

iii. As great as Abraham was, he realized he was inferior to Melchizedek.

c. The Levites took tithes from the people, but this man who did not descend from the Levites took tithes from them through Abraham.

d. Not only that, this man blessed Abraham and the greater blesses the lesser.

e. Because Levi was a descendant of Abraham, it is right to say that Levi, in Abraham, tithed to Melchizedek, making him and his priesthood lesser than that of Melchizedek.

f. Verse 8 is interesting and difficult.

i. The men that die are, of course, the Levites.

ii. It is debated as to whom the writer is speaking when addressing the one that is living.

(1) Some believe it is a reference to Jesus.

(2) Others believe it is a reference to Melchizedek.

(3) If it is Melchizedek, it is not a problem, because he typified the coming Christ, who is living, so in a sense, either way is a reference to Jesus.

g. So three things are told us here that show Melchizedek was greater than Abraham: he received tithes from Abraham, he blessed Abraham, and had a greater priesthood than the offspring of Abraham, Levi.