

Hebrews 7:1-10

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Date: 12 June 2016

Preacher: Arthur Jackson

[0 : 00] Please be seated. Good morning. Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for the morning. What a wonderful day it is in your presence with your people, singing your praises with opportunity to hear from your word.

So we commend ourselves to you and pray, Lord, that our hearts would be listening hearts. Our wills would be sanctified wills, and that you would be glorified in and through us in this world for the glory and honor of your name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Though he was born Cassius Marcellus Clay, his embrace of the Islamic faith eventually meant that he would take the name Muhammad Ali.

Most know him by that name. And personally, he dubbed himself the greatest. And in a larger-than-life personality, he was recognized as a great man across the globe.

[1 : 33] At his funeral on Friday, person after person, came forward, acknowledged him, validated in a sense his self-proclaimed title as the greatest boxer of all time.

And also as one whose acclaim and usefulness went far beyond the exploits that he accomplished in the ring.

Because of these things, Muhammad Ali will live in history and in the memory of many. But his life and labors are done.

On Friday, his 74-year-old diseased, riddled body was laid to rest. I mention these things by way of introduction because the writer to the Hebrews in today's text has one that he dubs as great.

Did you notice that in verse 4? See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave the tenth of the spoils.

[3 : 02] He dubs him as great Melchizedek. Great Melchizedek.

Up to this point, we've seen his name twice. Chapter 5, verse 6. Chapter 5, verse 10. He has been mentioned, but nothing of real substance has been said about this great man.

But that shifts in today's text. Did you notice the seamless way that we go from chapter 6, verse 20 into chapter 7, verse 1.

Whereas Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

For this Melchizedek, there it is, king of Salem, so forth and so on. The writer lets us know that the high priest who ministers in the sanctuary, the true sanctuary, heaven, is irreplaceable.

[4 : 16] He holds the position forever. Not only that, but he's from a different priestly order. And so he proceeds to go into chapter 7 to show us that though Jesus is not of the Levitical order, he's qualified.

Jesus is qualified to hold the position. So what he does is he builds a case. He builds a case for the significance of Melchizedek by pointing to his greatness, but ultimately he's not going to simply talk about the shadow, Melchizedek.

the tight, Melchizedek, oh, he's going to get to Jesus. He will get to Jesus. But he's pointing to his greatness and I see at least three ways in which in our text he does this.

His prominence is seen, first of all, by his priestly ministry. We see that in verses 1 and 2. we also see that Melchizedek's greatness or prominence is seen not simply by his priestly ministry, but also by his priestly pedigree in verse 3.

But then there's another thing where his greatness comes forth and that is in his priestly superiority in verses 4 through 10.

[6 : 01] So first of all, what about the priestly ministry of this one known as Melchizedek?

Did you notice in verse 1, for this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed them?

Several noteworthy things are said about Melchizedek in verses 1 and 2. At the heart of them is the idea of his being a priest, but we cannot dismiss or ignore what the text says otherwise about him. Did you notice the titles that were affixed to his name? We see them both in verses 1 and verses 2. We know what it means to have titles or letters behind our name.

Graduation took place on the UFC campus on yesterday. What a grand event. And yesterday, after yesterday, some of you may have a title on the front of your name because you graduated.

[7 : 23] Or you may have a few letters on the back of your name because you graduated.

Congratulations. But did you notice the titles or the names that are affixed to Melchizedek's name?

Two prominent titles. Melchizedek is not simply a priest or just a priest as grand as that is within itself.

Someone who has been charged of God, he is God's agent, he is his mediation agent through which God comes to the people and through which the people come to God.

But it's not just that, he is a king priest, if you will. Two offices erode into one person.

But first of all, did you notice he's the king, a king, if you will. His very name, Melch, king, and Zedek, righteousness.

[8 : 33] He is the king of righteousness. And friends, this speaks of his character, but also the nature of his rule. The geographical place of his rule was a place called Salem.

That is an older designation for Jerusalem. And as king of Salem, he was also the king of peace.

Think about it. King of righteousness and king of peace. And if Melchizedek were running for president this year, it would be an easy choice.

And perhaps somebody should write him in. He represents the best in human government.

Righteousness and peace are the core characteristics of the kingdom of God in the messianic rule.

Huh? The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

[9 : 49] Huh? Wouldn't you like to have lived in Salem under the rule, the governance of Melchizedek? Can you imagine the government in the city?

Little to no crime, safe schools, safe streets and good schools, a city that would have been alive with mercy?

Huh? Oh, it sounds like the kingdom that is to come, over which the one that Melchizedek foreshadows will indeed rule.

Huh? He's a king. He's a king of righteousness. He is a king of peace. But also, did you notice that he's a priest?

Priest of the most high God. And it is in this particular vein that he interacts with Abraham.

[10 : 51] Matter of fact, I think we just need to turn to Genesis because we need to get this particular biblical snapshot. This is what the writer is using as far as his exposition.

Genesis chapter 14 beginning in verse 17. Genesis 14 beginning in verse 17.

After his return that Abram, Abraham, Abram known at that time but also Abraham who would be so dubbed later, after his return from the defeat of Ketalaoomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shalcheva, that is the king's valley.

In a sense he's met by two kings. King of Sodom goes out to meet him but before that encounter, look at verse 18, and Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.

He was priest of God most high. And notice what he does. 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.

[12 : 20] And Abram gave him a tenth of everything back to Hebrews.

That's the picture. That's what we're talking about. That ancient encounter where Melchizedek meets Abraham.

Huh? So, on that day, he met Abraham, and on that day, he didn't have on his kingly hat.

He had on his priestly hat. And not simply a priest of a lesser deity. He was, he bore the title, the priest of the most high God.

And as such, guess what he did? He exercised priestly ministry. That's what he's showing us. He's showing sort of the nature, the character of the Melchizedek king, deacon order.

[13 : 30] So, he returned from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. That is, Melchizedek blessed Abraham.

So, what that means is that he was an agent to whom God mediated his blessing. He was a human channel that God worked through to dispense his favors to bless people, particularly here, Abraham.

And according to the Genesis record, the blessing was twofold. It was a blessing of physical nourishment. He gave him wine and bread, refreshment for the body.

he was, perhaps he was battle weary. And God meets him through his priest on that day. But then, not only was there the blessing of physical nourishment, there was a blessing, a word of refreshment, if you will, for his soul.

Here we go. Melchizedek, he's God's agent. He's God's agent to bless. He's God's agent to strengthen. He's God's agent to encourage.

[14:47] Sounds like Jesus, huh? Huh? He's blessing the one who had the promises. And doing this at this particular time, at this particular moment, was indeed a God's sin.

Here he was on the back end of Sodom. He's on his way. Promises of God given to Abraham, Genesis chapter 14. Promises reaffirmed. In a covenantal kind way, Genesis chapter 15.

And in between, in between going from one affirmation of the promise to another, there's encouragement. May not see it, may not be fulfilled yet, but it's encouragement along the way.

That's what we see here. Huh? It's coming off a major victory. It was about to be presented and offered by another king, Sodom, huh? that he rejected.

See that in Genesis chapter 14 also. Here he is, he's met by God's representative and reminded of the ultimate source of blessing. That's God. That's God who possesses heaven.

[15:52] Aren't we tempted sometimes to get blessings another way? Ever done that? Ever tried the shortcut kind of way? Ever tried the dishonest kind of way?

Ever tried the non-prayerful kind of way? Huh? Oh, there's many ways to get. But sometimes after we get, oh, it's bitter to the soul and harmful to the life and disruptive to the family.

I'm speaking to someone here this morning, today. How you get, oh, but when it comes through a righteous channel, when it comes through the right way, ah, this could be blessing for a lifetime, huh?

Not only did Melchizedek exercise priestly ministry, he also received something. He received a priestly portion, huh?

2A, huh? Did you notice that Melchizedek was given the tie? Check it out. And to him, Abraham, a portion, a tenth part of everything, of this was the top.

[17:03] I mean, when they had the bounty, a tenth part of that which was on top of the spoils, huh? Ah, that's what was given. In the Levitical system, the tie was the portion of those who had given themselves to the very work of God.

They had no land inheritance per se, though there were portions in the various territories, but there was no territory called Levi, because God himself was the portion of the Levitical peoples, and that they served him, and God provided for them.

God was their portion, huh? So, he's giving a blessing, Melchizedek is, but he is receiving, he is functioning in the priestly!

domain! It's what is being shown. It's a legitimate priestly order, God is working through him. It's what the writer is showing us, huh?

The priestly ministry is the focus of the writer's attention. Verses 1 and 2. But there's a shift a bit when we get to verse 3, huh?

[18:17] Here we see the greatness of Melchizedek as it relates to his priestly pedigree. Check it out, look there, he is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but check it, resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever, huh?

He is distinguished by his priestly pedigree, that is his family background, his lineage, his heritage, his history. The priesthood is what's in view.

Under the old covenant, the Levitical priestly order had birth records in order to legitimize their pedigree.

Another way of setting it is they had papers, if you will. Referring to this particular biblical snapshot, Genesis chapter 14, this literary snapshot that we looked at, the writer notes that, as far as we can see there in that text, no father, without mother, no genealogy, right, no papers, huh?

Didn't have it, huh? He is a priest without papers, yet the absence of those did not mean he did not exist, and he did not function as a priest, because clearly we see that he did, huh?

[19 : 54] And as far as the biblical record goes, Melchizedek stands as God's appointed priest. May not fit your design for it, huh?

May not fit your profile, but he has the very stamp of God, God's working in him, God's working through him, huh?

While some would see Melchizedek as the pre-incarnate Christ, huh? Or an angel. Seems like the fullness of what we see of him and the way that he is described in his particular role in Genesis seem to argue against this kind of view.

He is a type of Christ, yes, huh? He's a shadow of what Christ fulfills fully, huh?

But his priestly pedigree bears the things in common with God's son that he foreshadows rather than resembling the likeness of earthly priests.

[21 : 06] Melchizedek has the characteristics, the copy, the image of the son of God. God's son is God's original.

Melchizedek is the copy. He's uniquely depicted in the biblical record. As far as the record goes, without mother, without father, without genealogy, we see in a literary sense what was actually true existentially.

In the priestly In the priestly pedigree of Melchizedek, we get a copy, a shadow of the eternal nature of Christ. Priesthood.

Ministry. His pedigree. Look at verse 4 again. See how great this man was? The greatness is seen in priestly ministry.

Greatness is seen in priestly pedigree, but also his priestly superiority. We see that in verses 4 through 10. The readers are urged in verse 4 to interesting word, contemplate, or to see how great.

[22 : 24] Contemplate the greatness of the one to whom Abraham gave a tenth of the spoil. He's already highlighted some things, but think about that. Consider this.

Abraham, this prominent patriarch with the promises. This founding father of the faith family gave a tenth of the spoils to this man.

This man that's elevated in Jewish and Hebrew history, this man. He gave a tenth to that man, Melchizedek. He recognized him and honored him as God's agent of blessing and favor.

And verses 4 and 5, he gave tithes to him. He's reiterating that. And Abraham received a blessing from him. Verse 6, by this man who does not have his descent from them, received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

And again, both of these things, his receiving and his giving, speak about his superiority. And not simply the superiority to Abraham, but also the Levitical priesthood.

[23 : 41] Both speak of his superiority. Abraham recognized the priestly worth of Melchizedek as to how he responded to him.

He received from him but also he gave back to him. Such being the case, friends, the reader here, somewhat implicitly and also to us, we're not simply here to see the greatness of Melchizedek. Is there not fundamentally a call to see the greatness of the one that Melchizedek foreshadow? And not only that, to imitate the faith of those who through faith and promises, faith and patience inherit the promises.

Example, Abraham. Listen to this reason, this logic. The response of the head of the family to this man should characterize the response of the whole family.

Imitate the faith of Abraham as it concerns our great high priest, Jesus. That's what's underneath this. What's the writer saying?

[25 : 10] He points to Melchizedek noting his priestly ministry, his priestly pedigree, and his priestly superiority. His purpose, however, is not simply to exalt Melchizedek.

He does so to validate the legitimacy of the priesthood of Jesus, the priestly order. This is what Jesus is a part of. The priesthood of Jesus is a legitimate priestly order, and the priesthood of Jesus is a superior priestly order.

While we ponder and look at the greatness of Melchizedek, we are called to celebrate the greatness of Jesus.

He deserves our attention. It's wonderful. Finally, we've landed. I've got a lot to say about Melchizedek. We're here.

It's starting to roll out. And what he's saying, look at the shadow. Oh, but don't stop there. Look at the substance.

[26 : 21] For in Jesus, do we not see the person who is occupying two offices? Is he not a priest king? He is the ruler who reigns.

And guess what? One name and one title are not enough for him. For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given.

And here it is. The government will be on his shoulders. He's king. And on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it.

Here it is with justice and righteousness. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

That which is foreshadowed in Melchizedek is perfected in Christ. When we consider the greatness of the one Melchizedek foreshadows even Jesus, we know that one title is not enough.

[27 : 30] One of my favorite renditions that we do here at HTC is a song that Ben taught us. I came into it some years ago.

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing. My great Redeemer's praise. Who is he?

He's king and priest and advocate and redeemer and savior and living word. He's wonderful, merciful.

He's the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world and on and on and on and just in one book alone. He's the captain of salvation. He's the author and the finisher of our faith.

One title is not enough. He's the king priest who not only saves through his death having entered into the eternal holy of holies with his blood.

[28 : 28] Chapter one verse three, but he abides there and he invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

He's a king priest and he refreshes us even today with his present day ministry at the right hand of the throne of God behind the curtain at the right.

See how great this man is? And this is how one text in Hebrews describes him the following way, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

And we are his house if we indeed hold fast our confidence and boasting of our hope. have you found Jesus priesthood to be a legitimate one?

Have you come to him for forgiveness of sins? Oh, he provides that. He has borne the sin of many.

[29 : 48] Huh? He was bruised and whipped for our sin. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. Huh? And he entered into heaven with marks that were put there for your redemption and mine.

His blood was shed. He has provided redemption for us. Have you found him sufficient in all of the situations of life? Have you come boldly to the throne of grace?

if you do, you'll find health in the time of need. See how great Jesus is?

Let's celebrate him and live for him accordingly. Let me pray. Father, we give thanks today for your great kindness and your great mercy in and through Jesus and our great great high priests.

We bless you. We honor you. We celebrate you this morning. Blessed be your name.