

Abram meets Melchizedek

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn now to Genesis chapter 14, Genesis 14 at verse 17. After his return from the defeat of Caroleomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh, that is the king's valley.

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. Melchizedek is always fascinated and indeed puzzled readers of the Bible and commentators.

And you'll find that there are many different opinions as to Melchizedek and who he was and why he appears in the Bible the way he does.

There are many questions that are asked about him. Who exactly was he? Why is there such obscurity about him? And why does that actually then get dealt with in the way that Hebrews 7, as we read, actually deals with it?

[1 : 24] Well, let's just pick up a few preliminary points that we want to take with us. What we're going to do is basically look at what you find here in Genesis 14. And just look at the points that are made there.

And then we'll carry that with us into Hebrews 7. And see how Hebrews 7 deals with the various points that you find in Genesis 14. Because that's where you get the whole picture as you take Hebrews 7 basically as a commentary on what you find here in this incident in Genesis 14.

The first thing that we need to say is that Melchizedek was not himself God, nor was he Jesus, the Son of God, appearing before he took out human nature as he did in the New Testament times. Melchizedek was a human being. He was an actual king. But there are certain things about him that show that he was very significant in terms of his position.

Which made him, as the New Testament in Hebrews 7, as we'll come to it, says, he was made like the Son of God. He is, as you find a meeting with Abraham here, he is somebody who is a type of Christ.

[2 : 45] In other words, we use that word type very often. But what does type really mean? It means a representation of something before that something or someone actually comes into being.

Or you could say that types of Christ in the Old Testament are things like, for example, the Passover lamb. That is a sacrifice, a sacrificial lamb, a literal animal that was used as God directed Israel to use it.

But it portrayed something that was going to happen a long time afterwards in Jesus Christ himself. In the person and in the work and in the death of Jesus Christ, what you find in the Passover lamb comes to fulfillment.

In other words, the Passover lamb was a type of Christ. It represented what would be seen in Christ when he came. And it's the same idea with Melchizedek.

Instead of seeing him as already Jesus Christ in this world or God, he is a type of Christ. The offices he actually possesses are the important things that you need to actually look at.

[4 : 06] For he is a priest king. He appears here really not from the people of Abraham, but from outside of those people of Abraham.

And yet he is a believer in God and he is a priest of the Most High God. He is someone who acts as a priest and to whom Abraham gives a tenth or a tithe.

Because that's what was given to the priests. As later on God gave those rules and regulations to them. The important thing is not what he was as a person.

But what he was in terms of his office. What he was in terms of being priest king. And it's there that he represents Jesus Christ. It's in that that he particularly represents the Lord.

Now the aim of scripture in dealing with Melchizedek. In telling us about Melchizedek here and in Hebrews 7. The aim of scripture is always important to recognize.

[5 : 12] What is scripture's purpose in telling us about Melchizedek? It's purpose is not to say, well Melchizedek was in fact the son of God. And he met Abraham long before the son of God actually took human nature to himself.

That's what some people make of it. But the aim of scripture is not to tell us that. But to say this is someone in whom you find things that came to be fully realized and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In other words all the way through the Old Testament. You had this mysterious figure of Melchizedek. You had him appearing again in Psalm 110. And other vaguer references to it as well. But all the way through God is teaching the people. Here is something that is going to be fulfilled in your priest king. In the Messiah when he comes. He kept the hope of the people of Israel alive by these types.

So that when Jesus came. It should not have been a surprise to them. That he came as a priest king. That he himself embodied the offices and the quality of Melchizedek.

[6 : 28] Type anticipating Christ himself. Let's look at Melchizedek here in Genesis. It's interesting that he meets with Abram. He goes out to meet Abram.

After Abram's come back as we saw last time. In this defeat of Keterliomer and these kings. In other words what Melchizedek does as he goes to meet Abram.

Is to acknowledge Abram's victory. And in fact there's many in many respects. Abram too is someone who represents Christ's victory.

As we saw last time over these kings. And Melchizedek goes to meet him as Melchizedek. That's his name. These are two Hebrew words that are put together.

Melchizedek the Hebrew word for king. And Zedek the Hebrew word for righteousness. So his name itself embodies these ideas. That he's the king of righteousness.

[7 : 28] That's what his name means. That's why he's like Christ. That's why he's representative of Christ. He is king of righteousness. He's also the king of Salem.

Salem was a place. Some people think it is actually Jerusalem. The last part of Jerusalem is Salem. And some people think that this Salem was what later came to be called Jerusalem.

In any case that doesn't really matter much. But what is important is the meaning of Salem. It means peace. It's very much related to the word Shalom. In Hebrew.

Again is the king of peace. So here is a king priest. Who comes to meet Abraham. To acknowledge his victory. And he is in his name king of righteousness.

He is as he rules over Salem as a king. He's the king of peace. He has already built into him. In terms of what he is and his functions. Things which are a picture for us.

[8 : 31] Of the Lord Jesus Christ. The king of righteousness. And the king of peace. And what does he do? He brings out bread and wine.

Now there is a lot being said about that as well. Because bread and wine obviously are the two elements that you find in the Lord's Supper. And some people conclude from this. That this was a sacramental meal.

That Melchizedek brought out bread and wine. So that there was a kind of Lord's Supper type of event. As he acknowledged Abraham's victory.

Now that of course really can't be the case. Because bread and wine were not made sacramental. Until Jesus took them many hundreds of years after this.

And made them the elements that remembered him. That represented him in his death. This is my body. This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

[9 : 31] That wasn't in place until hundreds of years after Melchizedek met Abraham. And what this really means in the Hebrew language that's used there. In the ordinary sense of it.

Is that he made a banquet for Abraham. He brought bread and wine. Which is a description of a full dinner or a banquet. Something really to acknowledge.

To celebrate the victory that Abraham had achieved. As the king priest. The king of righteousness. The king of Salem. He brought out bread and wine.

And he brought something that would honor Abraham's victory. You see the details are building up as to how this is a picture for us. Of Christ and of the blessing that comes.

To his people through Christ. As the king priest. As the king of peace. As the king of righteousness. As the king who brings to us blessings.

[10:27] And who has himself indeed established. Means of grace through which we get further blessings. And then he comes to bless Abraham.

Or to pronounce blessing over Abraham rather. Blessed be Abraham. He's not so much Melchizedek himself blessing Abraham. But he pronounces a blessing. Which is in fact what a priest in the Old Testament would do.

Blessed be Abraham by God most high. Possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be God most high. Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.

In other words. The function of a priest. And of a high priest especially. Is twofold. And again you find built into Melchizedek. Things which are a picture for us.

Of Christ as our high priest. He first of all. Brings blessing from God. To his people. Blessed be you by God.

[11:27] Through the priest. He then brings. The praise of the victory. Back to God. To glorify God. Blessed be God most high.

Who has delivered your enemies into your hands. In other words. When you now put that together. As part of the picture. Here is Melchizedek. This actual human being. Who is the king of this place called Salem.

Whose name means king of righteousness. Who combines in himself. The elements of kingship. And priesthood. Who brings out this meal. To celebrate the victory of Abraham.

Over these kings. Who were his enemies. And who comes now to pronounce. Blessing from God upon Abraham. And returned praise to God. From Abraham through himself.

Through this priest. Christ. That is really. A picture for you. Of the priesthood of Jesus. Through whom we come. To receive blessing from God.

[12:24] And through whom. We return praise. To God for the victory. That Jesus enables us to share in. The victory over sin. The victory over death.

The victory over all the things. That Jesus has gained victory over. And they are all here. In this picture. In this Old Testament imagery. In this literal human person.

But then. You have all of this mystique about him. Just so as to make him like. The son of God. And then of course you have got a tenth.

Given to him. Abraham gave him a tenth. Of everything. That is what. Priests also received. A tenth. Because they were ministering.

In the place. They were ministering. In their place. As representatives. Of God. So let's turn to the New Testament. Let's turn to. The passage we read. In Hebrews 7.

[13:20] Which really is the commentary. On this as we've said. I'm not going to obviously. Have time to. To look at all the details. Of Hebrews 7. But if we just look at. The main features of it. That correspond to.

What you find in. In Genesis 14. The main thing I want us to focus on. Is how Hebrews 7. Talks about.

The order. Of Melchizedek. The order of Melchizedek. The word order. Does not mean. Command. Some people have mistakenly thought.

That Melchizedek gave an order. And that Jesus came by order. Of Melchizedek. Which again confuses the issue. Order here means. The kind of thing.

That it is. In other words. Think about it this way. Think about the life we have as human beings. Just ordinarily. And just look out into the field there.

[14:16] And look at a sheep. That too has life. It has life in some ways. Similar to the life you have yourself. It breathes. It has lungs.

It requires. An intake of food. For its sustenance. It has growth. It gives birth to lambs. Just as we give birth to children.

Like ourselves. Who are human beings. And they develop into sheep. There are so many. So many things that. You can see in these two types of life. The human and the sheep.

That way you could say. Are similar. But human life. Is of a different order. To the life of a sheep. Human life.

Is a life that has. Reason. Intelligence. Will. Purpose. And especially a soul. Which a sheep does not.

[15:10] It's of a different order. It's in a different category. If you like. And what. Hebrews 7 is telling us. Is that. The Levitical priesthood. The priesthood that came.

With Aaron. And then. The people of Levi. Afterwards. That ministered. As priests. All the way through. The Old Testament. The priesthood of Jesus. Is of the order. Of Melchizedek. It's a different category. To that. Of the Levites. It is. Above that. Of the Levites. It's. Similarity.

Yes. There's similarity. But there's also. Superiority. That's really. What Hebrews 7 is saying. It's comparing the two. The priesthood. Of Jesus.

Which is like. Melchizedek. Because Melchizedek. Was his type. And there's the priesthood. Of the Levites. That began. Not with an oath. From God. As that of Jesus did.

[16:04] But with the law. Why is Hebrews telling us that? Well because. It appears that. Those that. This letter was written to. Were.

Really. Pretty much. Had said. That. Come to the conclusion. That. The kind of thing. You had in the Old Testament. Was actually better. You could see the priest. You can't see.

This Jesus. He's disappeared. From the world. You could actually see. Many of the rituals. That were taking place. With your eye. And there were. Things that you had to.

Provide animals. For you. The various things. And the sacrifices. All the other rituals. And all of these things. That God has specified. In great detail. At times. And. They were saying.

Well. We'd really be better off. Wouldn't we. With these things. We can see things happening. We don't really see. Jesus. He is. In heaven. What Hebrews. Is saying to us. Is that.

[17:01] The ministry. Of Jesus. Is far. Above. And far superior. And far better. He's gone. Into. The sanctuary. Of heaven. Not the kind of sanctuary.

The priest had. In this world. When he went into the tabernacle. Into the holy of holies. In other words. The Hebrews. Letter. Really. All the way through it. And here. In comparing.

Melchizedek. And Jesus. And the Levitical. Priesthood. Is really saying to us. This is what really. Must fill your mind. The ministry. Of Jesus. The priesthood. Of Jesus.

The superiority. Of Jesus. The way that Jesus Christ. As the king. Priest. Of his people. Is of a different order. All together. To that.

Of the Levites. And that's why. You find him. For example. Saying here. If you look at. Verses 11. To 18. You'll find there. That. He's described.

[17:57] The Levites. Are described as. Having come from. A particular tribe. Obviously. A tribe of Levi. But the priesthood. Of Jesus. Doesn't belong.

To the tribe of Levi. He didn't come. From the Levites. He came from Judah. What is Judah? Judah is the tribe. Of kings. Judah is the tribe. Of David.

The tribe. Of the kings. That represented Christ. As well. And. In verse 3. You find. Along with that. He is without father.

Or mother. This Melchizedek. Having neither beginning. Of days. Nor end of life. You don't take that. Literally. What you take it. Is that. There's no record.

Of it. And therefore. He is. As that verse says. Made like to. Or resembling. The son of God. He remains a priest. Forever. Okay.

[18:49] So. Instead of. Thinking of Melchizedek. Being God. Or being. The son of God. And being eternal. He was made like. The son of God. So that.

You could see. That Jesus priesthood. Remains forever. The Levitical priesthood. Every. High priest. Once he died. Was. Replaced by.

Another one. And death. Always intervened. In the line. With Jesus. His high priesthood. Continues. Forever. It never ends.

He never has to be replaced. It goes on. Unchangeably. And that's why you find. In Hebrews 7. There. That he's the guarantor.

Of a better. Covenant. The former priests. Were many in number. Because they were. Prevented by death. From continuing. In office. Consequently. He is able.

[19:43] To save. To the uttermost. Those who draw near. To God. Through him. Since he always lives. To make intercession. For them. In other words.

All of that. Really opens up. The nature. Of Christ's priesthood. And what we're going to conclude. From it. This is. I know there's complexities. In this. I know this is. Kind of.

Very theological. But it is. Such an important. Biblical strand. Of teaching. So that we'll. Get to Jesus. And get to know. Who Jesus is. And get to know. The kind of priesthood. That he has. That it's a different order. To the Levites. That they were just given. A certain time. In the course. Of God's revelation. So that everything. Ultimately. Would lead. To Jesus. And that this Melchizedek. Represented Jesus. Long before. The Levites. Actually appeared. On the scene. What are the three points. [20 : 39] About the priesthood. Of Jesus. That really are important. For us. To take from all of this. It's a very. I know it's been a very. Quick dash. Through the details. You can go back.

However. And look after. Look at them. Yourselves. Of course. First of all. It's a royal priesthood. He's a king priest.

In the Old Testament. You have. Stare on the high priest. You have the high priest. All the way down. Through. The course of the Old Testament. You have the king. Separate. Different. Person. They were kept separate. But when it came to Jesus. Because his priesthood. Is of the order. Of the category. That Melchizedek. Portrayed. Then he is the king priest. He combines. In himself. Kingship. And priesthood. And that means that. Your high priest. The one. Through whom.

[21 : 33] You receive blessing. From God. And through whom. Your praise. Ascends. Back to God. Is a priest. Enthroned. And that's.

Really. Important. Why is it important. Because. He is now enthroned. Forever more. In heaven. And as he is enthroned. Forever.

Forever more. In heaven. He is enthroned. After. He has finished. The work. That was given him. To do. In other words. His priesthood. Is a priesthood.

That continues. To present. His completed work. For his people. And he does it. As a king. As well as a priest.

It means that. There is no one. Anywhere. Like Jesus Christ. There is no other. That can ever be said.

[22 : 30] To be the priest king. As he is. He is a royal. Priest for us. Secondly. The important. Second important point.

Is that his priesthood. Is lasting. It is. Not. In need of a replacement. And what. Does Hebrews 7. Actually make of that.

Makes this of it. In verse 25. Consequently. He is able to save. To the uttermost. Those who draw near. To God. Through him. Since he always lives. To make intercession.

For them. It is a lasting priesthood. And the lasting priesthood. Is keyed. Into. To our need. For someone. To intercede. For us. For someone.

To always be representing us. At the throne of God. Or on the throne of God. Or before the throne of God. He is able. To save. To the uttermost.

[23 : 24] Whatever that phrase. Really means. And there is a lot of. Again. Different opinions. As to the exact meaning. Of the phrase. To the uttermost. But it actually means. At least this. That whatever your need is.

However great your need is. Whatever uttermost. May come into your life. Christ. Is more than. Able to deal with it. He is able to save.

To the uttermost. Wherever. Your. Sin. Reaches to. You. The grace. Of Christ.

Has reached further. There is nobody here. Who can possibly. Conclude today. That you have something. In your life.

That means. That salvation. That the ability. Of Christ. To save. Will not reach it. And you see.

[24 : 20] That is. In verse 25. It is put in such. An important. Way. He is able to save. To the uttermost. Those who draw.

Near to God. Through him. He doesn't save. Anyone else. He doesn't save you. Without you. Drawing near to God. He doesn't save you.

By you staying away. From him. He doesn't save you. Just through a mere. Formal. Knowledge of him. In the gospel. He doesn't save you. Just because you know.

That such a high priest. Exists. He doesn't save you. Just because you know. He is able to save. To the uttermost. He saves you. Through drawing.

Near to him. And it is pointless. Knowing. All these things. About Melchizedek. And his relationship. To Jesus Christ.

[25 : 14] And how he was such. An early portrayal. Or type. Of Christ. Christ. The important thing is that. You take all of this information today. And even if you don't understand all of it.

And even if you say about it. Well that was really complex. And I didn't follow it all. That really. Essentially. Is not the most important thing. How much you understand of it. And how much you are able to follow the thread.

Of the scripture. Teaching on it. That ultimately isn't the important thing. The important thing. Is that you have drawn. Near to God. Through Christ.

That's why he's there. As the aim of scripture. In giving us this information. About Melchizedek. And about Jesus. And about the priesthood.

That Jesus possesses. He is able. To save. To the uttermost. All that come unto God by him.

[26 : 10] Seeing he ever lives. To make intercession for them. For whom does he make intercession? For those who draw near to God.

Through him. Somebody must be. Remembering you. Before God. More than you remember yourself. How many moments.

Of every day we live. Are we not consciously. Remembering ourselves. Before God. Most of the time. Isn't it?

Most of the time. We don't do that. And even if we did. How effective. Would our remembering be. Compared to the death. That Jesus died. How effective. Would our provision be. If we were trying to be. Priests for ourselves. To represent ourselves.

[27 : 05] Before God. God. The answer to that is. If you look at a dead corpse. Can that corpse. Bring itself to life. No.

Can we bring ourselves. Out of our sins. Out of our guilt. To stand fully accepted. Before God. No. We don't need to.

Because he's done it for us. That's the kind of. Peace we have. Because he ever lives. To make intercession for us.

That means. To. Speak for us. To present a positive. Case on our behalf. Through what he has done. Himself on the cross.

And by his resurrection. You know. One of the questions. We always need to. Ask ourselves. Nobody. Nobody can. You know this yourselves.

[28 : 03] It's perfectly obvious. Nobody can die. The death. We need to die. We're all going to die. We're all going to leave this world. We're all going to enter eternity.

And we all have to personally. Do that. For ourselves. Nobody does it. For you. And one of the things. We constantly need to ask is. Who's remembering me?

Where is my safety? How do I get through this? And know that when I'm on the other side of death. I achieve victory over it.

The answer to that is here. In the king priest. Because. As Hebrews 11 puts it. These all died.

In. Faith. When you die in faith. When you've drawn near to God. Through Christ. When Christ is your savior. He's interceding for you. He's with you through every step of life.

[29 : 05] And he's with you through death. And he's with you till you're safely on the other side.

And then he doesn't leave you. He's with you throughout all eternity. That's your king priest. That's why it's so critical.

That you draw near to him. That you make him your own. That you take possession. Of all the things that he has died to achieve for his people. So that he will make intercession for you.

And that that will go on forever. Thirdly. He's not just royal. And lasting. But also very fitting.

Because that's what you find in. Verse 26. Such. A high priest. Was indeed fitting. That we should have such.

A high priest. Holy. Innocent. And staying separate from sinners. And exalted above the heavens.

You see. Sometimes we hear that verse quoted. Such a high priest became us.

[30 : 06] Holy. Harmless. And undefiled. Separate from sinners. That's not all that the text says.

The last part of it is. Even more important. Exalted above the heavens.

Ministering in the sanctuary above. That's the kind of priest we need. Not the Levitical ones. But the one that is of the order of Melchizedek. The lasting one.

The royal one. The one that goes on interceding for us. That's why it says there. Such a high priest. It was fitting for us.

It was an amazing thing that. Such a great person as Jesus is. You might say about Jesus. Well. He's really so great.

There's no way in all the world. That he would fit into my life. My real life. My small life. My needy life. But that's exactly what he's for.

[31 : 06] He's exactly suited. To your exact needs. Such a high priest. Was fitting for us. He matches.

Every requirement. And he always will. He will never lose. That shape. Of being fitted. To meet your needs.

So there it is. It's all about Jesus. It's all about. His priesthood. It's all about. How fitting he is.

For us. And so it's all about. Our response. What's our response to it? Romans 12. And Hebrews 13.

Romans 12. 1. Offer yourself. To him. As a living sacrifice. Holy. Acceptable. To God. Which is your reasonable service.

[32 : 05] Hebrews 13. Let us therefore. Go out. To him. To this Jesus. Out with the camp. Bearing his reproach. Here we have no continuing city.

But we are seeking. One to come. Which one? The one where he. Is the ruling king. And the ministering priest. And fitted.

For the eternity. Of his people. Is he your priest? Is he your king? Is he your savior?

Is he your king? Of righteousness? And king of peace? Let's pray. Bless you as Lord we pray. Your word. And make us.

Truly thankful. That you have given us. Such a glorious. And suitable redeemer. Bless us now we pray. Through this day. And pardon our sin. For Jesus sake. Amen.