

The Two King-Priests in the Bible. Jesus and Melchizedek

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[0 : 00] Over the years, you've heard me refer to the word types in the Bible.

! Usually, but not always, the type originates in the Old Testament, finds its fulfillment! in the New Testament. What do I mean by a type?

Well, for instance, men like Moses, Joseph, David, were types of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today we come to the seventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, and we're going to be looking at another type of Christ.

It is a man by the name of Melchizedek. And the Bible gives us very scant information about what was truly a great man.

And I've always been an admirer of Melchizedek. The only references we have to Melchizedek are found in a few verses in Genesis and Psalms and the book of Hebrews.

[1 : 26] For the most part, types are weak illustrations of our Lord. Now, why do I say that?

Well, I say that because when you have a type that's a human, you're dealing with sinners being compared to the creator God of the universe, a God who's absolutely sinless, absolutely holy.

And of course, Melchizedek is in no way equal to Christ. Christ has no equal. The triune God has no equal. They used to play games and say, what's the opposite of God?

And the people would just jump right in and say, Satan. No, God has no opposite. But Melchizedek is a great man, a great man of God.

He's worthy of study in both the Old and New Testament. He had a very unique priesthood and station in life that is also worth studying.

[2 : 32] And in many respects, the seventh chapter of Hebrews is the focal point.

This section of Scripture deals with a central fact, both in Judaism and in Christianity, and that's the priesthood.

In Jewish religion, the priesthood was exalted because it was essential to the offering of sacrifices for the temporary forgiveness of sin.

Now, in Christianity, the office of high priest, and I capitalize those, should be exalted because it is essential for the eternal forgiveness of sins.

Under the old covenant, Israel was given the law, which no Israelite ever kept completely, even for a moment.

[3 : 46] And therefore, a system of temporary atonement was established. It involved human sacrifice through human priests.

And that went on for about 1600 years. We sometimes give Henry Ford credit for the assembly line. I think that was an assembly line with these offering sheep and goat and turtle doves and whatever, not for rams, but it was an assembly line.

And Israel practically had this army of priests, thousands of them. But they only had one high priest, small h, small p.

He was a human. That's why I didn't capitalize that. And once a year, through an elaborate, 24-hour, unbelievably bloody sacrifice, or series of sacrifices, he would enter the Holy of Holies and the tabernacle and later the temple to make atonement for the nation.

And for me, at least, the operative lesson on that is found in Leviticus chapter 16.

[5 : 19] I don't think any of us make a practice of reading Leviticus, but 16 is worth reading frequently every year, several times. Under that covenant, God accepted these sacrifices as an act of faith and granted forgiveness.

And it lasted until their next sin, but at least they had forgiveness. Now, in our study of the book of Hebrews, we first saw Melchizedek in Hebrews chapter 5.

I don't know if you remember that. But I'm going to read those passages to you again in Hebrews chapter 5. We studied that a few weeks ago.

I'm beginning from verse 1 to verse 10. Verse 11.

He was the first high priest of the Levitical order.

[7 : 01] So also Christ did not exalt Himself to be made high priest, but was appointed by Him who said to Him, You are my Son.

Today I have begotten you. It's pretty easy to figure out who that's talking, right? God the Father. As He says also in another place, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death.

And He was heard because of His reverence. Although He was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

It was here the Holy Spirit told the Hebrew church about Melchizedek. And the amazing thing about this man is that he was a priest king.

[8 : 21] In the life of Israel, there were kings and there were priests. For instance, David was a king.

The father of John the Baptist, Zechariah, was a priest. But the only two priest kings mentioned in the Bible are Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are no others. And that is why Melchizedek, or one of the reasons why he is such a beautiful picture or portrait or type of Christ.

Now the Bible is amazing because God Himself ultimately wrote it through the Spirit of God. We find that Melchizedek was mentioned all the way back in the book of Genesis.

Thousands of years go by and he shows up in the Psalms and more years go by and we find him here in the book of Hebrews. The Bible word for that is divine inspiration and the unity of the Scriptures.

[9 : 42] But the first time we meet Melchizedek in Scripture is in the book of Genesis chapter 14. Let me read that to you. After his, and that's speaking of Abram, before he became Abraham.

After his return from the defeat of Chedor-Pharaoh, I had to slow down on that. And the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Sheva.

That is the king's valley. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was there in addition to the king of Sodom.

And this Melchizedek was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him, meaning Abram. And he said, this is Melchizedek speaking, 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 hands. And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

[11 : 02] And the king of Sodom said to Abram, give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself. Now that's the bad guy, king of Sodom.

And we know Sodom has quite a history, right? But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted my hand to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich.

I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten and the share of the men who went with me. Let Anan, Eshkol, and Mamre take their share.

Now the king of Sodom was an evil man. His mother named him Bera, B-E-R-A, not Yogi, but that's a different spelling. And Bera was trying to make it appear that he was the one responsible for Abram's victory rather than God.

Well, you can see the thin ice he already put himself on believing that. We next have a brief reference to Melchizedek in Psalm 110, verse 4.

[12 : 22] The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. Why won't he? Because he's immutable, unchangeable. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

But who is Melchizedek? And there's been much conjecture for a few millennia about who this person really is.

Some believe he was an angel that took human form. But the priests were never angels. No evidence anywhere in the Word of God where a priest was an angel.

Now there were some very godly men, and probably the most godly was Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse, great man of God, 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

And they believed that Melchizedek, he believed, and other men believed, Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 32] But he's described in the New Testament as one made like the Son of God. So for other guys, that phrase seems to eliminate any suggestion that he is actually the Christ, the pre-incarnate appearance.

And we're not going to settle that issue tonight, I can tell you. The heart of our passage in Hebrews is the proof of the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek over that of the Levitical Arionic priesthood.

This came into my head. I always remember what Dr. J. Verminagee said about that debate, whether he was pre-incarnate Christ or just a man who had a lot of the attributes, a type of Christ. And he said, Donald Gray Barnhouse believed he was the pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. He said, if you want to believe that way, you'll be in tall cotton.

Because he said, I revere Donald Gray Barnhouse. But then Dr. McGee said, but if you want to believe the right way, you'll believe the way I do. As only he could do.

[14 : 42] The heart of our passage in Hebrews is the proof of the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek over that of the Levitical Arionic priesthood.

Aaron, first priest, and it came from the tribe of Levi. That's where those guys came from. Hebrews 7, verses 1 to 3. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which means king of peace, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

Now let me just say, I didn't put this in the notes, but when it says he was without a father or mother, that means we didn't know who they were. He had a mother and father, I can assure you.

We just didn't know who they were. Without genealogy. Well, Jesus had two great genealogies, Matthew and Luke. First chapter of Matthew, third chapter of Luke.

We don't have any genealogy for Melchizedek. Having neither beginning of days nor end of life. We don't know when he was born. We don't know when his life ended.

[16 : 38] But he would be thousands of years old, of course, if he's alive today. He is alive in glory. But made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

Now first we are told that Melchizedek was the king of Salem. Where is that? Not Massachusetts. I think there's a town there, Salem.

Salem is the ancient name of Jerusalem or Jerusalem. You see the Salem in that. And we are next told that he was priest of the Most High God.

This priest came upon Abraham and prayed to the God of Heaven, the Most High God, and offered blessings to Abraham.

And this occurred just after Abraham had defeated those four evil kings. And after blessing Abraham, the patriarch, and Abraham is the patriarch of the Jewish people and Christianity.

[17 : 55] We are grafted into Abraham. And he blessed. After blessing Abraham, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils that he obtained from his conflict with these four evil kings.

The Spirit of God mentions the fact that Salem means peace. Thus making Melchizedek the king of peace.

Kind of a nice title. Now from previous studies, we know that the entire tribe of Levi was dedicated by God.

And their duties were to carry on the religious services of the nation of Israel. Again, first in the tabernacle, later the temple. All priests from Israel were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. Does that make sense? To be a priest, though, you had to be a Levite descended from Aaron.

[19 : 15] He was the first priest of the Jewish nation. Now Aaron, you will remember, was the brother of Moses. By the way, to this day, he's considered the greatest Jew that ever lived.

I take exception to that because Jesus was Jewish. What about the non-priestly members of the tribe of Levi?

What did they do? Well, they were assistants to the Levitical priests. They assisted them. But the Levitical priesthood was strictly Jewish in origin and non-Jews did not ever serve the priesthood, Levitical priesthood, the Arianic priesthood, in any capacity whatsoever.

The Levites were also subject to the king, just as were all the other tribes of Israel. However, their priestly duties were not subject to the king.

The king didn't give them their marching orders to serve out as the priests. That was the role of the high priest. The priest made atonement for sin, as did the high priest once a year.

[20 : 36] The day is called Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. But the forgiveness wrought was temporary. And that is why you had this assembly line of continual sacrifices.

They were required. The sin was steadily going on, so sacrifices were required.

The service of the priest was also temporary. Most of those guys entered the priesthood at age 25, and they retired at age 50, after which their ministry came to an end.

The priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priesthood in many ways. And five of those ways are mentioned in the first three verses of chapter 7.

We'll dig those out now. One, Melchizedek's priesthood was universal and not just national. Now, the various names of God were extremely important in the Bible.

[21 : 52] In the Old Testament, the name of God was Jehovah and Yahweh. And so sacred was this name that no Jew would utter it. They were afraid that they would take His name in vain if they even spoke it.

It was deemed far too sacred to pronounce. When the Scriptures were read aloud and they came to the name Lord, they substituted the Hebrew word Adonai because that wasn't covered in the Ten Commandments.

Don't take the Lord's name in vain. So they used the word Adonai. And in that manner, the Jew did not risk taking the name of God in vain.

I remember being with a Muslim boy. We were traveling all over the Middle East. A good friend of mine to this day. And I was talking, we witnessed it to him, and I was talking about God the Father, and he was aghast.

A good Muslim would never refer to Allah as Father. You can't do that. Well, we can. The true God. The Levigal priest became known as the priest of Jehovah.

[23 : 10] Thus, the Levitical priest ministered only for Jehovah and only for the Jews. In the story of the Good Samaritan, you'll remember that the Levite passed by.

He didn't want to be defiled. Several of you were here last night and heard Sukumar from India. If Sukumar goes into the home of a Hindu, and he has Hindu friends, if he goes into their home, they then have to get a Hindu priest to come and fumigate the house.

And the other problem with Sukumar, you know, they have a caste system in India. He's in the bottom caste. And a minister that's in the middle caste or upper caste will not visit with him.

Won't even talk to him. Because he's a lower caste. That doesn't sound like pretty good Christianity to me. But what do I know? Melchizedek was the priest of the Most High God.

That's the word El Elyon. That's a more universal name for God. It alludes to the fact that God is the possessor of heaven and earth.

[24 : 27] And so we see the Most High God is God over both Jew and Gentile. He's God over everything. This is significant because Jesus is God not only over not only Jews, but also the entire universe as well as everything in it.

He's the creator. He owns it all. The priesthood of Jesus is universal as is Melchizedek's. The priesthood existed long before Aaron came on the scene.

Number two, Melchizedek's priesthood was royal. Melchizedek was a king. Rulership of any kind was totally foreign to the Levitical priesthood.

This fact is beautifully pictured of Christ as Savior and Lord. Jesus is both perfect priest and perfect king. And like I said, there's only two of those guys.

Jesus, the greater, and Melchizedek, the lesser. But both king priests. We note also that Melchizedek ruled over God's most special city in all the earth, Jerusalem.

[25 : 44] Centuries before Israel even entered the land as a nation, Melchizedek was there as king. It was undoubtedly difficult for the Jews to conceive of a priesthood that was older and more

holy than their own Levitical priesthood.

But it did exist under Melchizedek. Christ not only superseded their covenant, He also preceded it. The third thing I'll mention is Melchizedek's priesthood was righteous and peaceful.

The priesthood of Aaron was neither permanently righteous nor peaceful. I always remember when Moses went up on the mountain and Aaron was working on the fires and the pot of gold and meltdown gold and made that golden calf.

But do you ever look closely at what he said when Moses came down? Where'd that calf come from? And he said, it came out of the fire. He couldn't even bring himself to tell him, I made that. God created the Arianic priesthood to obtain righteousness for the people of Israel. He did that through animal sacrifice and the people would be restored to a right relationship with the Lord.

[27 : 14] They would then lapse into sin again and have to repeat the process. God honored a sacrifice properly made but these sacrifices were never intended to be permanent.

They did however point to the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Spawned another thought. I'm spinning off a little bit but I had a guy years ago. He wasn't a member of our church.

I promise you. But he came to me. He knew me. I don't know how. And he said, I'm going to a new church that's just starting.

It was in Copan. Sorry Pastor. It wasn't Baptist. And he said, I've got some questions about them. I'm a little troubled.

And I said, why? He said, well, every fourth Sunday night we go to Lake Copan and we sacrifice chickens to the Lord.

[28 : 15] And I said, well, flee from that. that's blasphemy. There's one sacrifice that we observe and we honor and that's the Lord Jesus Christ.

You get out of that. That's a dangerous cult. I don't know whatever happened to it. Willard went there and he got them all straightened out. I said, must have been because I never heard of them. Yeah. They fled.

They must have fled. When you showed up, they fled. Yeah. Melchizedek was rightly called the king of righteousness and peace. But he could not make men righteous or peaceful.

His priesthood, though, was a better one than was the Levitical priesthood. But both priesthoods were merely types of the perfect priesthood that would one day come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek was a very good picture of Christ. but he was only a picture. Only a type. Fourth thing we'll mention tonight is Melchizedek's priesthood was personal, not hereditary.

[29 : 29] The Levitical priesthood was entirely hereditary starting with Aaron. The membership was determined by genealogy.

And there's an interesting side note to that as well. In 70 AD, Titus Vespasian, the Roman general, later the Roman Caesar, they burned down Jerusalem.

They burned down the temple. All of those genealogical records, and they kept meticulous records to make sure those guys were related to Aaron.

They were all destroyed. And today, they don't know who they descended. They pretend. Well, I'm Levitical. Well, they don't know that.

Those records were all destroyed. Personal qualifications were meaningless. The priests were often more concerned with ancestry and pedigree than with holiness.

[30 : 34] Now, we really don't know where Melchizedek came from. The Bible is silent on his parents and other relatives. He had no genealogy. His lineage was meaningless to the priesthood.

And ancestry was everything to the Levites. And nothing to Melchizedek. He didn't care. I mean, he didn't even go to Ancestry.com.

It didn't matter to him. Christ had a genealogy, but it was meaningless as it pertained to his priesthood.

Jesus does not trace back to Aaron or Levi. You can look that up in the genealogies. He had no priestly genealogy, and he didn't need one.

He didn't need one. And the fifth thing we'll mention is that Melchizedek's priesthood is eternal, not temporary. Levitical priests served from age 25 to 50.

[31 : 37] No one could serve over 25 years. The priesthood was temporary. The priesthood of Melchizedek was perpetual. It will never end.

Now, Melchizedek ended at some point. He's not roaming around the Middle East. The day came when he died. But his priesthood lasts for eternity.

Now, how can that be? Because his priesthood lasts through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the point of all that. Beginning in Hebrews chapter 7 and verse 4, Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils, and those indeed of the sons of Levi, who received the priest's office, have commandment in the law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham, but the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.

Without any dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater. In this case, mortal men receive tithes, but in that case, one receives them of whom it is witness that he lives on, and so to speak, through Abraham, even through Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he is still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Levi was in the loins of Abraham. Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to the Levitical priesthood in five ways. I just mentioned, but the Melchizedek priesthood was also superior to the Levitical priesthood for at least three reasons.

[33 : 41] The first thing we notice is that Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek. Abraham was the father of the Jewish people, but he gave his choicest spoils to Melchizedek.

Even though he was a king, there is no evidence that Melchizedek had done anything with or for Abraham, but Abraham recognizing Melchizedek as a king appointed by God Most High did not hesitate to gift him with a tenth of the choicest spoils of his war with those four evil kings.

By paying the tithe, Abraham was honoring the God who had appointed Melchizedek. Now in all of this, the Holy Spirit demonstrated that Melchizedek was greater than Levi and Aaron.

They started the Levitical priesthood and Abraham was their progenitor, but this priest-king, a type of Christ, was even greater than Abraham. Now there was no law that required Abraham to make such a payment or gift to the priest-king.

He did so as an act of generosity and as an act of grace. Under grace, we are free from the demands of the law.

[35 : 11] In this matter of giving, it is my belief that we are not under any instructions to an amount. I know that comes with a lot of shock. Now, it does not mean that giving is optional, but we give out of devotion and gratitude to our priest-king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If a tenth is your standard, that's okay. I remember one man put it this way. He thought we should give more in terms of money and time under grace than the Jews did under law.

I always kind of like that. I don't really live up to it. Second, Melchizedek blessed Abraham. The Bible says this is the lesser blessed by the greater.

They did all this without disputing. Now, how interesting that almost the entire Old Testament is a story about the descendants of Abraham.

But this priest-king comes along and was greater than Abraham or anything that ever descended from him. And then third, Melchizedek's priesthood is eternal.

[36 : 25] Hebrews 7, 8, In this case, mortal men receive tithes, but in that case, one receives them of whom it is witness that he lives on. And again, lives on through Christ.

the Levitical priests were required to cease ministering at age 50. Even if they did not have that requirement, they would have stopped at death, and that was kind of the maximum reach.

In all respects, their ministry or priesthood was temporary because they were temporary. In spite of the fact, everyone knew the Levitical priests would eventually die, the people paid tithes to them.

But Abraham paid a tithe to a priest who in type lives on forever. The priesthood was, this priesthood we're talking about was much superior to Aaron.

Now in reality, Christ is the true priest. He is the eternal one of whom Melchizedek was merely a picture. Christ is the only priest who lives forever and ministers forever.

[37 : 37] And 450 trillion millennia from now, he'll still be ministering as we measure time. He is the living priest.

Christ is a better priest than is Aaron and Melchizedek. He is the only priest who can bring men and women to God permanently, eternally.

Now do not forget that the story of Melchizedek was preached to the members of this church of Hebrews.

That's what we're studying. The epistle to the Hebrews. The permanence of Christ's priesthood brought great comfort to those in this church who were breaking with the old covenant. which means they were breaking with the Levitical priesthood and now they are embracing the true priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.