

# Hebrews Chapter Seven (vv.1-10)

Although a divine institution, Judaism was introductory, temporary and imperfect. God had established better things in Christ: His *priesthood* is **better** (Hebrews 7); He is Mediator of a **better covenant** (Hebrews 8); He has entered into a **better sanctuary** (Hebrews 9) and effected a **better sacrifice** with **better blessings** (Hebrews 10).

Hebrews 7 explains that the Levitical priesthood has been divinely set aside. It could not bring perfection (v.11) and has been changed (v.12). Its replacement is the superior Priest and priesthood of the Son of God. His priesthood is *after* the **order of Melchizedek**, something which originated (Genesis 14) and was announced in the OT (Psalm 110) and will now be demonstrated to be far superior than the **order of Aaron**.

<b>Order of Melchizedek</b>	<b>Order of Aaron</b>
Precedes the Aaronic order (Genesis 14)	Inaugurated approximately 400 years later (Exodus 28)
No record of genealogy (Hebrews 7.3)	Depended on genealogy (Ezra 2.62)
Marked by life without succession (Hebrews 7.8, 24)	Marked by death and succession (Hebrews 7.23)
Continues (Hebrews 7.3)	Obsolete (Hebrews 7.11-12)
Superior (Hebrews 7.11)	Inferior (Hebrews 7.11)

Note. **Order** = 'arrangement in time' or 'succession'.

Melchizedek is only mentioned in three places in Scripture: **Genesis 14** (historically), **Psalms 110** (prophetically) and **Hebrews 5-7** (doctrinally). In the millennium Christ will function after the **pattern** of Melchizedek. Genesis 14 demonstrates this pattern:

- Melchizedek was a king-priest (Genesis 14.18). This will be the ministry of the Lord Jesus in the millennium. *Zechariah 6.13: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.* Note. Believers are **holy** and **royal** priests (1 Peter 2.5, 9). The former involves *worship* and the latter *witness*.
- **After** the trial of Abraham's battle with the kings (Genesis 14.1-16), Melchizedek met him and brought forth bread and wine (Genesis 14.18). Bread and wine shall be the character of the coming kingdom when Christ shall minister succour to Israel **after** the tribulation days. *Isaiah 2.4: They shall beat their swords into plowshares (bread), and their spears into pruninghooks (wine).*
- Melchizedek was priest of the 'Most High God' (El Elyon). This is a relative, millennial title and has reference to a scene where every hostile force is brought into subjection to the One who is Most High, the 'Possessor of heaven and earth'. *Psalm 22.28: For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations.*
- Melchizedek **blessed** both Abram and God (Genesis 14.19-20) thus uniting earth and heaven and leading the praise towards God. *Psalm 22.22: I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*
- Melchizedek was king of righteousness (like David who subdued every foe) and king of peace (like Solomon). These shall be the foundations of the coming kingdom. *Isaiah 32.1: Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness. Isaiah 9.7: Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.*

In the present age, the Lord Jesus functions after the **order** of Melchizedek but **pattern** of Aaron. He meets our need in relation to the throne and the wilderness journey (Hebrews 2.17-18) ministering sympathy and succour **during** the trial.

## Chapter Seven

**7.1-3:** The **Person** of Melchizedek.

**7.4-10:** The **Prominence** of Melchizedek.

**7.11-28:** The **Perfection** of Christ's Priesthood *after* the Order of Melchizedek.

**1** For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God (officially), who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him (historically);

'For' links back to 6.20 where the Lord Jesus is declared to be 'high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'. Melchizedek was king of Salem, an ancient name for Jerusalem (Psalm 76.2). This is the first mention of Jerusalem in the Bible, the city from which the Lord Jesus will reign in righteousness and peace (Psalm 48.2). *God had a priest long before Aaron and a king in Jerusalem long before David.* It is of interest that Melchizedek met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings. He was an overcomer, but battle worn and weary. The ministry of Melchizedek was able to strengthen him for the meeting with the king of Sodom (typical of the material blessings of this world offered by Satan)

and refuse his temptation to make him rich (Genesis 14.17, 21-24). Praise God that our Great High Priest still ministers to us during the wilderness journey. He dispenses the sympathy and strength needed to face the foe. Melchizedek **exercised** his priesthood by blessing Abraham (Deuteronomy 21.5, Luke 24.50-51).

**2** *To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace (morally);*

In the giving of the spoils to Melchizedek, Abraham **recognises** him as the divine representative and acknowledges God as the reason for his victory. There is nothing in Scripture without reason. Melchizedek's name means 'king of righteousness' and he reigned from Jerusalem making him the 'king of peace'. Righteousness and peace are ever linked together in Scripture (Psalm 72.3, 7, 85.10, Isaiah 32.17, James 3.18). Righteousness is the intrinsic character of the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 1.8-9, Isaiah 9.6, Jeremiah 23.6) and peace can only be imparted on this basis. It is at Calvary where righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Psalm 85.10) as God provided a righteous basis on which He could invite sinners to enjoy peace with Himself (Romans 5.1, 14.17). *First faith, then works (Ephesians 2.8-10). First suffering, then glory (Luke 24.26). First doctrine, then duty (Romans, Ephesians). First communion, then commission (Mark 3.14).*

**3** *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life (personally); but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually (continually).*

Melchizedek was 'made like unto the Son of God'; he was a 'facsimile' copy. Not that Melchizedek was the Son of God, but rather the Scriptures record only certain details about his life in order to perfectly foreshadow the Priesthood of Christ. *Melchizedek was made like unto the Son of God as to His Person. The Son of God was made like unto Melchizedek as to his office (v.15).* They must be two different persons! Scripture therefore records Melchizedek as *symbolically* and *typically* what the Son of God is *essentially* and *intrinsicly*. In v.3, Melchizedek is considered in his **priesthood** rather than his **manhood**. The fact that there is no record of his father, mother, birth, death or genealogy is therefore crucial. Genealogies were of the utmost importance to the Aaronic priesthood with no man able to exercise priestly functions unless he could prove descent from the family of Aaron (Ezra 2.62, Nehemiah 7.64). As these details regarding Melchizedek are unrecorded, he therefore has a priesthood which knows **no** beginning, **no** end and **no** succession! In this way he 'abides a priest continually'. His priestly life did not cease at 50 like that of the Levites (Numbers 8.25).

**4** *Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5* *And verily they ~~that are~~ (out) of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:*

Now, 'weigh thoroughly' and 'ponder intensely' how great Melchizedek is. Even the 'first father', the ancestral head and founder of the nation recognised the superiority of Melchizedek's office by voluntarily giving him a 'tenth of the spoils'. The word 'spoil' means 'the top of the heap' and speaks of the 'choicest portion'. Abraham gave him the **best**. Do we give our best to God? He gave His best for us. We should reciprocate (see 2 Corinthians 8.5, 9, 9.15 in context). *1 Corinthians 16.2: Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.* The emphasis of v.5 lies with the fact that the priestly family of Aaron received tithes by **commandment** of the law and from their very **own brethren** (not strangers). In fact, 10% of Israel's produce was given to the Levites as their inheritance (Numbers 18.20-30) and a further 10% of this (the 'tithe of tithes') was given to the priestly family (Numbers 18.26).

**6** *But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7* *And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8* *And here (Levitical law) men (priests) that die receive tithes; but there (Genesis 14) he (Melchizedek) receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

In contrast to the Levitical law of v.5, Abraham **voluntarily** gave tithes to one who had **no family** ties with him. Melchizedek had no legal right to exact tithes from Abraham, but he received them in virtue of his own person and office. In addition, Melchizedek blessed Abraham (Genesis 14.19) and it is a well-known and accepted fact that the lesser person is blessed of the greater. In Luke 2, Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary, but **not** the child Jesus. *When one considers the greatness of who was blessed, Abraham, the father of the faithful, the greatness of the bestower of the blessing, Melchizedek, is increased.* Furthermore, the Levitical priesthood was marked by mortality and **death** (v.8), but the priesthood of Melchizedek is marked by perpetuity of **life**. He is declared to be living as the Scripture records no instance of his death. *Hebrews 7.24: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

**9** *And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10* *For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*

Melchizedek's final mark of superiority comes with an unusual statement: Levi, as yet unborn, paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham. This is federal headship. Abraham is viewed as **head** and **representative** of all his descendants. Thus, the one who legally received tithes (Levi), actually paid tithes to another (Melchizedek). Note the importance of the federal headship of **Adam** (Romans 5.12-19) and **Christ** (1 Corinthians 15.22, 45-47). Just as Levi was in Abraham, so we were in Adam (death and condemnation), and now in CHRIST (life and justification)!