

Melchizedek the Priest

⁷ This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” ³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

⁴ Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!

⁵ Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. ⁶ This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. ⁸ In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. ⁹ One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰ because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

Jesus Like Melchizedek

¹¹ If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ¹² For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. ¹³ He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵ And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶ one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is declared:

“You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.”^[a]

¹⁸ The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

²⁰ And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹ but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

“The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind:
‘You are a priest forever.’”^[b]

²² Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.

²³ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely^[e] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

²⁶ Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Footnotes

1. [Hebrews 7:17](#) Psalm 110:4
2. [Hebrews 7:21](#) Psalm 110:4
3. [Hebrews 7:25](#) Or *forever*

Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary (concise)

[<< Hebrews 6](#) | [Hebrews 7](#) | [Hebrews 8 >>](#)

(Read all of [Hebrews 7](#))

[Complete](#) **Concise**

Chapter Contents

A comparison between the priesthood of Melchizedec and that of Christ. (1-3) The excellence of Christ's priesthood above the Levitical priesthood is shown. (4-10) This is applied to Christ. (11-25) The faith and hope of the church encouraged from this. (26-28)

Commentary on Hebrews 7:1-3

(Read [Hebrews 7:1-3](#))

Melchizedec met Abraham when returning from the rescue of Lot. His name, "King of Righteousness," doubtless suitable to his character, marked him as a type of the Messiah and his kingdom. The name of his city signified "Peace;" and as king of peace he typified Christ, the Prince of Peace, the great Reconciler of God and man. Nothing is recorded as to the beginning or end of his life; thus he typically resembled the Son of God, whose existence is from everlasting to everlasting, who had no one that was before him, and will have no one come after him, in his priesthood. Every part of Scripture honours the great King of Righteousness and Peace, our glorious High Priest and Saviour; and the more we examine it, the more we shall be convinced, that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Commentary on Hebrews 7:4-10

(Read [Hebrews 7:4-10](#))

That High Priest who should afterward appear, of whom Melchizedec was a type, must be much superior to the Levitical priests. Observe Abraham's great dignity and happiness; that he had the promises. That man is rich and happy indeed, who has the promises, both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This honour have all those who receive the Lord Jesus. Let us go forth in our spiritual conflicts, trusting in his word and strength, ascribing our victories to his grace, and desiring to be met and blessed by him in all our ways.

Commentary on Hebrews 7:11-25

(Read [Hebrews 7:11-25](#))

The priesthood and law by which perfection could not come, are done away; a Priest is risen, and a dispensation now set up, by which true believers may be made perfect. That there is such a change is plain. The law which made the Levitical priesthood, showed that the priests were frail, dying creatures, not able to save their own lives, much less could they save the souls of those who came to them. But the High Priest of our profession holds his office by the power of endless life in himself; not only to keep himself alive, but to give spiritual and eternal life to all who rely upon his sacrifice and intercession. The better covenant, of which Jesus was the Surety, is not here contrasted with the covenant of works, by which every transgressor is shut up under the curse. It is distinguished from the Sinai covenant with Israel, and the legal dispensation under which the church so long remained. The better covenant brought the church and every believer into clearer light, more perfect liberty, and more abundant privileges. In the order of Aaron there was a multitude of priests, of high priests one after another; but in the priesthood of Christ there is only one and the same. This is the believer's safety and happiness, that this everlasting High Priest is able to save to the uttermost, in all times, in all cases. Surely then it becomes us to desire a spirituality and holiness, as much beyond those of the Old Testament believers, as our advantages exceed theirs.

Commentary on Hebrews 7:26-28

(Read [Hebrews 7:26-28](#))

Observe the description of the personal holiness of Christ. He is free from all habits or principles of sin, not having the least disposition to it in his nature. No sin dwells in him, not the least sinful inclination, though such dwells in the best of Christians. He is harmless, free from all actual transgression; he did no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth. He is undefiled. It is hard to keep ourselves pure, so as not to partake the guilt of other men's sins. But none need be dismayed who come to God in the name of his beloved Son. Let them be assured that he will deliver them in the time of trial and suffering, in the time of prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

Gospel Coalition: Eternal Melchizedekian King-Priest

In the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews raises Melchizedek's profile to a pre-incarnate Christ-figure. Melchizedek is eternal, having no "father or mother" and "resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever" ([Heb. 7:3](#)). Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek also confirms his greatness ([Heb. 7:4](#)).

Following Melchizedek, Jesus is the true king of righteousness ("Melchizedek") who lived the perfect life no human being could. Jesus is also the true king of peace (Salem) who came to earth to bring peace through his sacrificial death and resurrection. Jesus is also "a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" ([Heb. 7:17](#)) and not through Levitical lineage ([Heb. 7:14](#)), making his priesthood superior ([Heb. 7:11](#)).

As a result, "This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant" ([Heb. 7:22](#)). Because "he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever" ([Heb. 7:24](#)), "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" ([Heb. 7:25](#)).

Thus, believers can rest knowing that Jesus is the perfect King who rules with infinite power and justice. Believers are also comforted knowing Jesus is the perfect Priest who ministers with infinite mercy and sympathizes with us in our weaknesses ([Heb. 4:15](#)).

As a result of our union with Christ, believers are reminded of our Melchizedekian calling to expand his kingdom through truth and justice as members of God's royal family and to be a channel of mercy and healing to the covenant community, as well as to the rest of the world.