

MELCHIZEDEK
King of Righteousness
King of Salem
Priest of God Most High

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Abstract

Melchizedek is identified as the direct representative of per-incarnate Christ, who appeared to Abram (Gen.14:18-20). He is accepted as one with Christ, eternal, and as the only member of the priestly order of Melchizedek. He is identified in Psalm 110:4 as the Christ.

Introduction

Many Bible scholars grossly underestimate the importance of Melchizedek in a theological sense. I believe this error is due largely to their inordinate dependence upon human scholarly practices in the exegesis and interpretation of Scripture to the neglect of discernment given by the Holy Spirit of God. In my opinion, one should defer to truth discerned by the Spirit even though it differs from the human interpretation deriving from scholarly pursuits that use much extra-biblical evidence such as parallel secular history and archeological findings in order to form theological judgments.

Historic Melchizedek

(Gen.14:18-20)

When Abram returned from rescuing Lot and his family and possessions from Chedoloamer and his associates, Abram was met by Melchizedek who brought bread and wine and blessed Abram and gave praise to God Most High. Melchizedek did not offer any animal sacrifice (the precedence for which was set from the time of

Abel and Cain or earlier), but rather, he used the elements of bread and wine. Well, one might argue, Abram was tired and hungry and thirsty, and bread and wine would have refreshed Abram. However, one must remember that Melchizedek was Priest of God Most High and his mission was one of spiritual blessing, not humanitarian relief. Thus, we are left with food for thought, because this is all of the historical account of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek in Prophecy

(Psalm 110)

Psalm 110 is a psalm of David, and the fact that David was both a king and a prophet cannot legitimately be disputed. Psalms 2, 16, 22, 40, and 110 (and perhaps others) are prophetic Messianic writings. Notice, in particular, Psa.110:1 and 4.

“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ ”. [In passing, note David’s recognition of Christ as his Lord.]. Then in v.4, “The Lord has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek’ ”. This concludes the pertinent prophecy.

Melchizedek Interpreted

(Heb.5, 6, and 7)

Much effort has been expended either to prove or to disprove the assertion that the historic Melchizedek of Gen.14 was a Christopheny (i.e. , a manifestation of pre-incarnate Christ). The writer of the Hebrew letter apparently saw Melchizedek as Christ revealing Himself [at least in part] to Abram. The writer of Hebrews recognized Melchizedek as a unique character revealed in Holy Writ.

A studious consideration of Heb.7:1-10 reveals some pertinent facts:

- Melchizedek had no known father or mother (v.3a).
- Melchizedek had *no genealogy*—no family tree (v.3b).
- Melchizedek had no record of birth or death (v.3c).

- *He was made in the likeness of the Son of God* (v.3d).
- He remains *a priest continually*—without interruption (v.3e).

These comments by the writer of Hebrews are deliberately pointed, indeed, and should claim our immediate and undiluted attention. Accordingly, a few comments seem appropriate here. No other character, even a minor one, who is mentioned in Scripture is said to have no parents and no genealogy [if the reader knows of one, please name him or her. A few persons are mentioned without naming their names, but that does not mean that no one knew their name or family.] Any prominent person who was a king and a priest would certainly have had a known genealogy. Furthermore, Melchizedek appeared and disappeared on the earthly stage without a trace, except for the scriptural glimpse in Gen.14:18-20 and the prophetic assertion from David under the influence of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 110.

Heb.7:4-5, 8-10 tells us that Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham, and (in essence) from Levi who was commanded to receive tithes from his brethren according to the law of the Aaronic priesthood, thus placing Melchizedek above both Abraham (the progenitor of Levi) and Levi (the progenitor of Aaron, the first high priest under the law), moreover, showing that the Melchizedekian priesthood is unlike and superior to the Aaronic priesthood. In addition, Abraham willingly received a blessing from Melchizedek and paid him a tithe of all the spoils from Chedoloamer's defeat. Consider these actions on Abram's part, the conqueror of his enemies, the master of an army of servants and rich possessions and the possessor of the covenant promises from God. What would be required to convince Abram to behave so in the presence of Melchizedek? The clear implication of the facts, as stated in Scripture, is that Abram recognized Melchizedek for who He was, just as he recognized the Lord (a Christopheny or a Theopheny) in Gen.18 when He and two angels appeared at his tent door.

According to the Order of Melchizedek

Logic now begs the question, *‘What is the order of Melchizedek?’* The answer to this crucial question is not too difficult, nor is it obscure or mysterious. Since Melchizedek is a priest continually (Heb.7:3), according to the power of an endless life (speaking of Christ in Melchizedek’s order—Heb.7:17), and Jesus is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb.6:20), *then Jesus and Melchizedek have to be one and the same, because of their eternity. Moreover, the order of Melchizedek, by virtue of His eternal and unique priesthood can have only one member—JESUS, THE CHRIST, Priest and King forever.*

Discussion

The theological view that Melchizedek was but an ordinary man, at best a type of Christ, though full of seemingly scholarly reasons for such a conclusion, totally misses the real reason why his name ever appeared in Scripture. The essential reason for the Genesis 14 account is to give an understandable basis for David’s prophecy in Psalm 110:4. Without the Genesis reference, the reader of Psa.110 would be at a total loss regarding Melchizedek, and there would be no prophetic interpretation in Hebrews. Moreover, having the identity of Melchizedek clarified by the Hebrew letter, gave the writer a perfect springboard for discussing and establishing the nature and superiority of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron.

If Melchizedek was not essential to the Covenant of Grace which God made with Abram (Gen.12:1-3), I am convinced that His name would never have appeared in the Bible at all. One of Satan’s chief means to oppose God’s truth is to attempt to override it by what is deemed human wisdom and so-called intellectual achievement. For example, those who would divorce the Church from any OT application gladly accept the theory that Melchizedek

was just a mortal man because they wish to limit grace to the New Covenant after the cross. Yet Heb.7:8 clearly ascribes immortality to Melchizedek (‘... of whom it is witnessed that he lives’—as opposed to the mortal men of the Aaronic priesthood).

The big fallacy of the ‘higher critical’ method is the assumption that the word of God contains superfluous and unimportant material. Clearly, God has chosen to frustrates the wise by the foolish, confounding the strong by the weak (1 Co.1:26-27). So it seems with the subject of Melchizedek!

In defining ‘the order of Melchizedek’, one should conceptualize some pertinent ideas, some of which follow:

- God and His affairs are eternal and infinite.
- The eternal contains the temporal.
- The infinite contains the finite.
- Eternity is a continuous state, not a time line.
- Eternity may be conceptualized as a circle or sphere whose center is determined by the Creator and the radius of which is infinite.
- Truth is both infinite and absolute and contains revelation.
- Sovereign God reigns over the infinite and eternal and everything these qualities touch—the finite, the temporal, the revealed and the hidden.
- Valid philosophy must transcend human knowledge and scholarship and time, and must yield to the eternal and sovereign God.
- Theology must keep its perspective. In attempting to understand and explain the affairs of Him who contains and directs all things, theology must yield to the authority of the One it seeks to explain.

With these concepts in mind, one should seek to ‘*...bring into captivity every thought in obedience to Christ, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.*’ (2Cor.10:5 [paraphrased]).

I would conclude that the Bible describes the Melchizedekian priesthood as continual (eternal), clearly contrasting it with the temporal priesthood of Aaron. Hence, Melchizedek represented Christ in His unique office of High Priest forever. Eternally, there is only one High Priest and the order of Melchizedek has only one member who is Christ. His ministry is eternal, and is therefore inter- or trans-testamental with regard to the Bible, since God's grace has been operational since before He created the first human.