

# The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews

## *Christ, Superior to Aaron (Continued)*

### *Hebrews 7:1-28*

- I. HIS SUPERIORITY IN PERSON (Hebrews 7:1-10)
  - A. The Identity of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:1)
    1. Introductory thoughts
      - a. Melchisedec (Melchizedek) is discussed in three primary passages (Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:1-28).
      - b. Historically, we know Melchizedek met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings that had taken Lot captive and he blessed Abraham. At that time, he was identified as the king of Salem in Genesis 14:18.
      - c. Prophetically, the psalmist spoke of “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).
      - d. Doctrinally, Hebrews chapter 7 makes it obvious that this was a prophecy pointing to Jesus Christ.
      - e. Regardless of those truths, the identity of Melchisedec is left to debate.
        - (1) The most common teaching is that Melchisedec is an unknown person who had a special relationship with God.
          - a) According to this approach, all guesses as to his identity are total speculation.
          - b) It is his unknown nature that makes him a type of Christ.
        - (2) However, there has always been a contrarian position by a minority of Bible students that identifies Melchisedec as a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.
      - f. The Bible pointed to the difficulties that would exist in the present subject matter (Hebrews 5:10-11).
    2. Five proofs that Melchisedec must be Christ.
      - a. His *titles* prove Him to be Christ.
        - (1) He is the “priest of the most high God” (Hebrews 7:1). In Mark 5:7, Jesus is called the “son of the most high God.”
        - (2) He is the “King of righteousness” (Hebrews 7:2). Of Christ it is prophesied that “a king shall reign in righteousness” (Isaiah 32:1).
        - (3) He is also called the “King of Salem” (Hebrews 7:1-2; Genesis 14:18). Salem is another name for Jerusalem (Psalm 76:1-2) and means peace.
        - (4) Note: Hebrews 7:2 makes a strong point of the fact that Melchisedec was “first” the “King of righteousness” and “after that” the “King of peace.”



- a) This order of righteousness followed by peace is found in numerous places in the scriptures.
  - b) In Isaiah 32:17, “the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”
  - c) This order is important because it is the divine order. The world will never have true peace until it first has righteousness.
  - d) This matches the first and second coming of Christ.
    - i) In His first coming, Christ came to fulfil righteousness (Matthew 3:15; Matthew 10:34-36).
    - ii) In His second coming, Christ will come to bring peace (Isaiah 9:6-7). There will be no true peace on the earth until the coming of the “King of righteousness.”
  - e) This order is also found in God’s work in the believer.
    - i) Romans 5:1 states, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
    - ii) Justification is the judicial act by which God declares us righteous (just) on the basis of the work of Christ for redemption.
    - iii) By Christ’s justification, we have imputed righteousness.
    - iv) Justification makes way for us to have peace with God. That is, peace follows righteousness.
- (5) By themselves, these titles do not prove that Melchisedec was Christ. However, they do show that, in the least, his work closely matches the titles and work of Christ.
- b. His *existence* proves Him to be Christ.
- (1) Hebrews 7:3 makes several statements about Melchisedec that strongly point to a divine identity.
  - (2) He is said to be without father (certainly in reference to an earthly father).
  - (3) He is without mother. This is historically true, if Melchisedec is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (Christ did not have an earthly mother at that time), but it is untrue if he is a man who later became a type of Christ (Matthew 1:18; Matthew 2:11).
  - (4) He is without descent. This does not fit a type of the earthly Jesus since He had an earthly genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17). Therefore, it must refer to a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.
  - (5) He is without beginning of days.
    - a) Does this fit a mere mortal?
    - b) All explanations of this that deny his identity as a pre-incarnate Jesus make light of the meaning of these words.
    - c) Supposedly, without mother does not mean he had no mother; and without descent does not mean that he had no



descent; and without beginning of days does not mean without beginning; and without end of life does not mean his life did not end.

- d) Instead, they supposedly mean we are not told of these matters in the biblical record. Of course, this could be said of many people in the Bible who make a brief appearance.
  - e) Why not take scripture at its word? This childlike faith would suggest that Melchisedec was an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ (see Micah 5:2; John 8:58). He is the only one who matches all the qualifications.
- (6) He is without end of life. As such, he “abideth a priest continually” (Hebrews 7:3).
- a) Where is Melchisedec abiding as a priest today, unless Melchisedec can be identified with Jesus Christ?
  - b) Hebrews 7:8 says that of him “it is witnessed that he liveth.”
- c. His *likeness* proves Him to be Christ.
- (1) He is “like unto the Son of God” (Hebrews 7:3).
  - (2) Though many teachers use this as a proof that Melchisedec was not Jesus Christ, it actually does the opposite. As such, it is a strong argument that the two are the same.
  - (3) An almost identical phrase is used one other time in scripture.
    - a) It occurs when Nebuchadnezzar said of the fourth man in the fiery furnace that “the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Daniel 3:25).
    - b) The term “like” is used to remind us that this One who appeared as a man was also God.
    - c) This phrase is only used of pre-incarnate appearances of Christ because He had not yet been declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3-4). This declaration did not make Him the Son of God. He had that relationship/position in eternity. It only declared Him to be so. However, in the earlier appearances, He is said to be like the Son of God though He was indeed the very Son of God.
  - (4) The opposite phrase, like unto the Son of man, is also used in references to Christ.
    - a) It always referred to the post-resurrection Christ (Daniel 7:13; Revelation 1:13; Revelation 14:14).
    - b) This phrase was used to remind us that this One who was obviously God also lived as and remains a man.
  - (5) These phrases using *like* do not mean that the One described was not the Son of God or the Son of man. Rather, they were used to show that when Christ was obviously God or obviously man, He was also the other.
  - (6) Therefore, its use in Hebrews 7:3 supports the identity of Christ with Melchisedec.

- d. His **superiority** proves Him to be Christ.
- (1) His superiority to Abraham (Hebrews 7:4, 6-7)
    - a) He received tithes of Abraham (Hebrews 7:4, 2; Genesis 14:14-17).
    - b) He blessed Abraham (Hebrews 7:6-7).
      - i) Abraham had the promises (Hebrews 7:6; Galatians 3:16).
      - ii) Then, Melchizedek blessed Abraham (Hebrews 7:6; Genesis 14:19).
      - iii) Therefore, Melchisedec must be superior to Abraham, since the less is blessed of the better (Hebrews 7:7; Luke 24:50-51).
  - (2) His superiority to Levi (Hebrews 7:5, 9-10)
    - a) This made Him superior to the Levitical priesthood.
    - b) Levi was in the loins of Abraham (Hebrews 7:10).
      - i) Not only had Levi not been born at this time (Genesis 14), but neither had his grandfather Isaac.
      - ii) If Abraham had died at this time, Levi would have died with him.
      - iii) As such, Levi was in Abraham and whatever Abraham did was in effect also done by his lineage.
    - c) The sons of Levi received the office of the priesthood and were commanded to take tithes of the Jewish people. Yet, Levi (the tithe-receiver) paid tithes in Abraham proving that Melchisedec was the better.
- e. His **priesthood** proves Him to be Christ (Hebrews 7:11-15, 23-24).
- (1) The Levitical priesthood was limited because of its inability to bring perfection (Hebrews 7:11).
  - (2) This demonstrated a need for another priesthood—one that would not have to change; one after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:15; Psalm 110:4).
  - (3) The fulfillment of the unchangeable priesthood came through the person of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:23-24).

## B. Superior in Title (Hebrews 7:1-2)

1. Having established the identity of Melchisedec, we can now focus our attention on the areas of Christ's superiority.
2. He is the "priest of the most high God" (Hebrews 7:1; see Mark 5:7).  
Note: The title "most high God" is used 11 times in scripture (Genesis 14:18, 19, 20, 22; Psalm 78:56; Daniel 3:26; Daniel 5:18, 21; Mark 5:7; Acts 16:17; Hebrews 7:1).
3. He is the "King of righteousness" (Hebrews 7:2; Psalm 45:6-7; Isaiah 32:1-2; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Romans 3:26).
4. He is the "King of Salem" (Hebrews 7:1-2; Genesis 14:18).
  - a. Salem is Jerusalem (Psalm 76:1-2)
  - b. Salem means *peace*



C. Superior in Existence (Hebrews 7:3)

1. He was without father.
2. He was without mother.
3. He was without descent.
4. He did not have beginning of days (Micah 5:2; John 8:58).
5. He did not have end of life (see Hebrews 7:8; Psalm 90:2).
6. He was made like unto the Son of God.
7. He abideth a priest continually (see Hebrews 7:23-25).

D. Superior in Priesthood (Hebrews 7:4-10)

1. In receiving tithes of Abraham (Hebrews 7:2, 4-6a, 9-10)
  - a. Abraham was the father of the fathers, yet he gave a tenth part of all to Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:2, 4).
  - b. This testified of the greatness of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:4).
  - c. The laws of the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:5)
    - (1) The lineage of Levi
      - a) Abraham begat Isaac.
      - b) Isaac begat Jacob.
      - c) Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, begat Levi.
    - (2) The office of Levi
      - a) The sons of Levi (Numbers 3:17)
        - i) Gershon
        - ii) Kohath
        - iii) Merari
      - b) The responsibilities of the sons
        - i) Kohath (Numbers 4:4-20)
        - ii) Gershon (Numbers 4:21-28)
        - iii) Merari (Numbers 4:29-33)
    - (3) The commandment of Levi—"to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren"
2. In introducing a new order of the priesthood—"he whose descent is not counted from them [Levites] received tithes of Abraham" (Hebrews 7:6a)
3. In blessing Abraham (Hebrews 7:6b-7)
  - a. Melchisedec "blessed him [Abraham] that had the promises" (Hebrews 7:6b).
  - b. "The less [Abraham] is blessed of the better [Melchisedec]" (Hebrews 7:7).
4. In his continued life (Hebrews 7:8)
  - a. "It is witnessed that he liveth" (cp. John 14:19; Revelation 1:18).
  - b. He abides a priest continually (Hebrews 7:3).
  - c. After the power of an endless life (Hebrews 7:16)
  - d. This man continues ever (Hebrews 7:24)
  - e. He ever lives to make intercession (Hebrews 7:25)
  - f. The first two points refer to Melchisedec; the last three to Christ.