

NOTE: At the end of this PDF is a very short chart that shows the comparisons between Melchizedek and Christ that are in this text.

Melchizedek, a Mystery Man (Genesis 14)

by
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Today I thought we'd talk about a sort of mystery man! Would you like that?! This man's name is Mel-chi-ze-dek.

But how is he a sort of a mystery man?! Well, you see, the Bible really doesn't tell us much about Melchizedek, so we don't really know much about him. So that makes him sort of a mystery, doesn't it? But even though the Bible doesn't say much about him, Melchizedek is still important. So let's see what the Bible does tell us about Melchizedek and why he is important, okay?

All right, then. The Bible tells us the story of Melchizedek in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. This true story takes place about 450 years after the story of Noah and the ark and the big, world-wide Flood.

Now, Melchizedek was evidently a very important man where he lived. You see, at that time often cities would each have their own king, and Melchizedek was the king of a city called Salem which was in the land of Canaan. Melchizedek was also a priest of the most high God. And the only story we have about him in the Bible was when he met Abraham, so we'll be talking a little about Abraham, too. It's an exciting story -- you'll like it!

Now you remember Abraham, don't you? Yes, Abraham was the father of Isaac and the ancestor of all of the Jews. Okay, then. This story about Melchizedek takes place when Abraham was living up in the hills in the land of Canaan. Abraham's nephew Lot was also living in Canaan, but Lot lived down in the city of Sodom. (This was before Sodom was destroyed.)

Now, about 14 years before our story today, there was a big king named Chedorlaomer and 3 other big kings who lived a long way away from Canaan, way east of Canaan. These 4 kings had gathered their armies together and had gone way over into the land of Canaan. There they had fought and conquered some of the cities in Canaan, including Sodom. These cities then had to serve the conquering kings. That probably means that every year the cities had to send taxes to the 4 conquering kings. Well, the cities of Canaan served them for 12 years, then the cities of Canaan rebelled and stopped serving them.

Chedorlaomer and the other 3 conquering kings waited a year, and that is when our story today happens. So. After waiting a year, Chedorlaomer and the other 3 kings gathered their armies

together again and went out to punish the cities in Canaan for not serving them anymore. Yes, Chedorlaomer and the armies got over there, and then they went charging down the east side of the Jordan River, around the bottom of the Dead Sea, and up the west side of the Jordan river, fighting the rebelling cities as they went. The kings of some of these cities, including the king of Sodom, tried to fight back, but they lost.

And as Chedoloamer and the armies came to a city, they would grab at least some of the people of the city as captives and they would take food and riches and anything else they wanted from the city and then keep going on to the next city. After doing this for a while they began heading back to go the long way to their home cities in the east. But they had made a big mistake -- one of the people they had captured was Abraham's nephew Lot! Uh oh!!

Well, somebody who had escaped from them got to Abraham up in the hills. He told Abraham what had happened and that Lot had been captured. O-o-oh, boy!! Abraham armed several hundred of his own men, got 3 of his friends who also armed their men, and these 4 armies took off after Chedolaomer and the others! They chased those bad armies for quite a ways and finally caught up with them.

At that point Abraham divided up his and his friends' armies, then he waited until night time. And then they attacked Chedolaomer and the other 3 kings! Abraham fought them, and the bad armies began running away! Abraham and his friends chased them clear up into the land of Syria! Then Abraham stopped chasing them and just let the bad armies keep running back to their homes in the east. But Abraham had gotten back the people that had been captured (including his nephew Lot) and the things that had been stolen.

Then after beating Chedolaomer, Abraham and his friends turned around and headed back toward their own homes in Canaan. And now Melchizedek comes into the story. You see, when they got to the city of Salem, out came Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Melchizedek went up to Abraham and gave him food and something to drink. Now, Melchizedek was not only a king, he also worshipped the only real God, the most high God and was a priest of the most high God. And Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Melchizedek said to Abraham, "Blessed be Abraham by the most high God who owns heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God who has given your enemies to you."

Then Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the things he had taken from the bad armies.

Now, the king of Sodom had also come out to meet Abraham. And the king of Sodom said to Abraham, "Please give me back the people of my city, but keep anything else that you've taken."

But Abraham told the king of Sodom that he wouldn't keep anything. Abraham said, "I have promised the Lord, the most high God, the One who owns heaven and earth, that I will not take even a thread of what is yours. If I did, you might say that you have made me rich." You see, the Lord had already made Abraham rich, and Abraham wanted only to give praise to the Lord for that.

And Abraham said, "I will only have the food that my men ate. But my 3 friends may take their share of what was taken."

-- And that is all we're told about Melchizedek! Yes, that is all we really know about Melchizedek himself! We don't know who his parents were, when he was born, when he died, if he were married, if he had children, or anything else about him! So, as I said earlier, he's sort of a mystery man, isn't he? But I also said that Melchizedek was important, didn't I? Now, why is a man that we know so little about important? Well, let's talk about that now. This may be a little hard to understand, but I know you can do it if you listen carefully and think about it. I find it very interesting, and I think you will enjoy it.

Okay then. About 1000 years after this true story of Abraham and Melchizedek, King David wrote the 110th Psalm. This Psalm is a prophecy about the Jewish Messiah who would come. (The Messiah, of course, is Jesus Christ. "Messiah" and "Christ" mean the same thing in 2 different languages.) This Psalm says that the Messiah (Jesus) would sit at the right hand of God and be a priest forever -- in the way that Melchizedek was a priest. Hmmmm! And it says that the Messiah would come and rule the earth.

But let's go on. Is Melchizedek ever mentioned again in the Bible? Yes, he is. You see, about 1000 more years after King David wrote that Psalm, in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament it speaks again of Jesus as being a priest like Melchizedek.

But what does that mean?! How was Jesus a priest like Melchizedek? In fact, how was Jesus to be a priest? Let's think about all of that for a minute, all right?

First of all, let's think about how Jesus is a priest. Well, Jesus wasn't a priest when He was here on earth, was He? No. When Jesus was here on earth, that was when He died on the cross for our sins, wasn't it? But 3 days after He died, Jesus was alive again (and lots of people saw Him alive), then 40 days later Jesus went back to heaven, didn't He? But, you see, there, in heaven, is where Jesus is a priest. He is our Priest in heaven! You see, the Bible tells us that if we trust in Jesus to save us from our sins, He will. And in heaven Jesus acts as a priest for us, a High Priest (and our only Priest). He does this by being our Priest before God the Father when we have asked Jesus to forgive our sins. Then, because Jesus died for our sins and we've trusted in Jesus, then God the Father says that our sins are forgiven. That means that someday we will be able to go to heaven and be with God! How wonderful!

So we have figured out how Jesus is a priest. Now let's go on and think about how Jesus is a priest sort of like Melchizedek was a priest. How can they be sort of alike?

Well, first of all, remember the Lord had told Moses that the Jewish priests all had to be descendants of Aaron, didn't He? But neither Melchizedek nor Jesus were descended from Aaron. Why, Melchizedek was a priest of God several hundred years before Aaron was even born!

Now, Jesus was here on earth hundreds of years after Aaron was born, wasn't He? But, as I

just said, Jesus wasn't descended from Aaron. In fact, Aaron and Jesus were even from different tribes of the Jews! Aaron was from the priestly tribe of Levi, and Jesus was from the kingly tribe of Judah. So how can Jesus be a priest if He wasn't descended from Aaron? Again, let's do some thinking!

Well, Jesus (our perfect High Priest in heaven) is the Son of God, isn't He? And Jesus was God the Son in heaven before He came to earth, wasn't He? And the Bible tells us that as God, Jesus had created the whole world. So, of course that means that Jesus the Son of God and the Creator was before Aaron was born, wasn't He?! After all, Jesus had made the world long, long before Aaron was even born! So both Melchizedek and Jesus were before Aaron, before Aaron was even born, weren't they? So I think that's partly what the Bible is talking about when it says that Jesus was to be a priest like Melchizedek. They were both before Aaron. But there is another way that Jesus is sort of like Melchizedek.

Remember that Melchizedek was both a priest and a king, wasn't he? Do you remember what city that Melchizedek was king of? Yes, Melchizedek was the king of the city of Salem. And do you know by what name the city of Salem was later called? Jeru-salem!! Yes, that's the same Jerusalem that became the capitol city of Israel and where the Jews had the temple of the Lord. But, of course, at the time that Melchizedek lived, there were no Jews yet, and there was no Israel yet. After all Abraham's grandson Jacob (also named Israel) wouldn't even be born for about 80 years after the Bible tells us about Melchizedek!

But what do Salem or Jerusalem have to do with this? Well, "Salem" means "peace" in the Hebrew language. So Melchizedek, the king of Salem, could be called the king of Peace, couldn't he? "Salem", "Peace". But Jesus is also the King of Peace. How? Well, for one thing, when Jesus comes back someday, He will be King of the whole world, and where do you think His throne will be? In Jeru-salem!! And "Jeru-salem" means "city of peace" in the Hebrew language. So, Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem ("Peace"); and the Lord Jesus Christ will be King of the whole world, ruling from Jerusalem, ("the City of Peace")! In that way Jesus will be King of Peace (Jeru-salem) the same as Melchizedek was king of peace (Salem), won't He?!

But Jesus is King of Peace in 3 other ways as well. You see, if people believe in Jesus, if they trust Jesus to save them from their sins, then their sins are forgiven and Jesus has given them peace with God. So that is another way Jesus is King of Peace. Yet another way is that Jesus then also gives them peace inside of themselves. They know that their sins are forgiven and that then Jesus is their King, and they know that someday they will go to heaven and be with Him forever. So this all gives them peace inside of themselves, doesn't it? But there is yet another way that Jesus is the King of Peace. You see, when the Lord Jesus comes back someday, He will be King of the whole world and will bring peace to the whole world.

So the Lord Jesus is king of peace in at least 4 ways, isn't He? Yes, King Jesus gives us peace with God the Father if we have trusted in Him. And Jesus gives us peace inside of ourselves if we trust in Him, then someday the Lord Jesus will bring peace to the whole world, and He will then rule as King of the whole world from the City of Peace (Jeru-salem). King Jesus!!!

All right, that explains how Jesus is King of Peace sort of like Melchizedek, But Jesus is King of Peace in much greater and more ways than Melchizedek, isn't He?

Now, Jesus could also be called the King of Righteousness, the righteous King! Do you think that Melchizedek and Jesus can be anything alike in that way, too? Let's think about that now.

Well, Melchizedek's name actually means "king of righteousness" in the Hebrew language! ("Melech" means "king" and "zedek" means "right" or "righteous".) So Melchizedek was both the king of righteousness (because of his name) as well as the king of peace (because of the city, Salem, where he was king), wasn't he?

But how is Jesus the King of Righteousness? Now, "righteousness" means being right with God. Of course, King Jesus Himself is righteous, isn't He? After all, Jesus actually is God, God the Son, isn't He?! But there is more than that. Jesus gives His righteousness to us if we trust in Him to save us from our sins. Yes, Jesus makes us right with God the Father when we have asked Him to forgive our sins. Also, Jesus is a King who rules righteously. So, the Lord Jesus is really both the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, isn't He?! Yes, Melchizedek was king of righteousness (his name) and king of peace (Salem), and the Lord Jesus is King of Righteousness and King of Peace, too.

So Melchizedek and Jesus are sort of alike in that way, too, aren't they? Of course, Melchizedek was only a king for a while, but some day when the Lord Jesus comes back to earth, Jesus will come as the conquering King and will rule forever. So the Lord Jesus will be the righteous King of Everlasting Peace, won't He?!

So, let's quickly go over again how Melchizedek and Jesus are sort of the same. Both were before Aaron was born. Both are called priests. Both are called kings. Both are not only kings, but are kings of righteousness and kings of peace. And both are kings ruling from Jerusalem. The big difference is that Melchizedek was just a man and was only a king while he was alive here on earth, while Jesus is both a man and is God too and will be Priest and King forever. We could say that Melchizedek is sort of a little picture of Jesus, couldn't we? But a picture isn't so important as the real thing, is it? And the Lord Jesus is the real thing, isn't He!!

So, while Melchizedek was a priest and king of a city for a while, the Lord Jesus, is the High Priest for everyone who trusts in Him and will be the King of the whole world forever!

So, why was Melchizedek important even though we know so little about him? Yes, Melchizedek is important because he is a little picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, Who is our High Priest and the King of Peace, our righteous King! Jesus is the most important of all men -- and He's God, too! King Jesus!!!!

I hope you found this as interesting as I did!

MELCHIZEDEK, A TYPE OF CHRIST

MELCHIZEDEK

PRIEST:

Priest of God on earth
Not descended from Aaron
(Before Aaron born)

KING:

KING of PEACE:
King of Salem ("Peace")

KING of RIGHTEOUSNESS:

His name:
"Melech" = "king"
"zedek" means "right" or
"righteous".

CHRIST

PRIEST:

High Priest in heaven
Not descended from Aaron
(Creator, before Aaron born)

KING:

KING of PEACE:
Gives peace with God
Gives us peace within ourselves
Will bring eternal peace
Will rule from Jerusalem
("City of Peace")

KING of RIGHTEOUSNESS:

Jesus is God, so is righteous
Gives us His righteousness
Will rule righteously