

13. Understanding Why Melchizedek Is Greater than Aaron

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the hope we have in Christ is like an anchor to our souls. We can depend on that hope of our eternal salvation because it is unchangeable. That is due to the fact that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek instead of a priest after the order of Aaron. In our topic today, we will see that Melchizedek is a much greater priest than Aaron which also means that Christ is a much greater priest than Aaron.

Hebrews 7:1-3 says, “For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated ‘king of righteousness,’ and then also king of Salem, meaning ‘king of peace,’ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”

In this chapter, we are going to see a comparison of the priesthood of Melchizedek and the priesthood of Aaron. We will see why Melchizedek gives us a real picture of Christ even though there is very little written about him in the Old Testament. Genesis 14:18-20 says, “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tithe of all.” In these verses, we see that Melchizedek was both a king and a priest. He was the king of Salem (later Jerusalem). He was also a priest of the Most High God. Melchizedek met Abraham when Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the kings who had taken Lot and his family as prisoners. When Abraham met Melchizedek, he gave one-tenth of all of the spoils that the Lord had given to him to Melchizedek.

The name “Melchizedek” means *king of righteousness*. The name “Salem” means *peace*. As a result, the name Melchizedek, king of Salem, meant that he was both the king of righteousness and the king of peace. Then, Psalm 110:4 says, “The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” Here, in the only other Old Testament passage that talks about Melchizedek, we see that he was also a priest. That passage also points out the fact that Christ is a priest who is from the order of Melchizedek and not the order of Aaron. That meant that the priesthood of Christ is greater than the priesthood of Aaron.

There are several ways in which Melchizedek is different than Aaron. First, there is no recorded genealogy of the family of Melchizedek. The name of his father is nowhere recorded in any record in the world. The same is true of the name of his mother. In addition, there is not a genealogy record anywhere in the world that includes the name of Melchizedek. There is no record of the beginning of his life or the end of his life. This means that it is possible for Melchizedek to provide a model or copy for the priesthood of Christ. Aaron and all of his descendants were priests for a period of time and then they died. Since there is no record of the death of Melchizedek, he provides an example of the fact that Christ remains a priest continually.

Hebrews 7:4-7 says, “Now consider how great this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.” We see that one of the things that revealed the greatness of Melchizedek was the fact that Abraham gave him a tenth of the spoils that they had gathered when they defeated the nations that had taken Lot and his family as captives.

The people of Israel gave tithes of the things that they possessed to the descendants of Levi. As a result, all of the descendants of Aaron received tithes from the people because they were priests and were descendants of Aaron. Numbers 18:21 says, “Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.” The descendants of Levi received tithes as their inheritance because they were the ones who did the work of caring for the tabernacle and also other responsibilities throughout the entire country of Israel.

Levi and all of his family were descendants of Abraham. That meant that even though Levi and Aaron were not born at the time Abraham met Melchizedek they would one day come from his family. As a result, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, he also served as a representative of all of his future descendants. In this way, Aaron and the other priests gave tithes to Melchizedek even though they were not yet born. As Hebrews 7:9-10 says, “Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.” In fact, every person that has ever come from Abraham participated in the giving of tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Melchizedek received that tithe from Abraham and then he blessed Abraham. Abraham had been given the promises in Genesis 12:1-3 which say, “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’” In Hebrews, we see that in addition to this blessing from God, Abraham also received a blessing from Melchizedek.

That is why verse 7 says that the lesser is blessed by the better. Abraham was the father of the entire nation of Israel. He received the promise from God that Christ would come through his descendants. Yet, he also recognized that Melchizedek was greater by giving him tithes. Melchizedek confirmed that he was greater than Abraham by giving Abraham a blessing. That is why the priesthood of Melchizedek was greater than the priesthood of Aaron. This is also why Melchizedek could be a picture of the priesthood of Christ.

Hebrews 7:8-10 goes on to say, “Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.” On this earth,

men who will die receive tithes from other people who will also die. Aaron received tithes as long as he lived but when he died he could no longer receive tithes. In contrast, the death of Melchizedek is not recorded anywhere in the Bible or in any other historical source.

The priesthood of Melchizedek continues because his death was never recorded. Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins but He had victory over death and rose from the dead. As a result, Christ is still alive to intercede for us. Hebrews 7:25 says, “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” Christ is our eternal High Priest because He will never die. He rose from the dead and is alive forevermore.

The descendants of Levi did receive tithes as long as they lived. However, Aaron died and every other priest of Israel eventually died or will die. Through the father of their nation Abraham, Levi and all of his descendants paid tithes through Abraham to Melchizedek. Abraham was representative of the entire nation of Israel. In that way, Abraham is similar to Adam. Adam represented every person that would one day be born on this earth. Romans 5:12 says, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” In the same way, Romans 5:19 says, “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.” We need Christ as our High Priest because He is the only One that can make us righteous.

None of the family of Levi had been born at the time that Abraham met Melchizedek. As a result, all of the descendants of Levi were represented when Abraham gave tithes of the spoils to Melchizedek. Moses was given the law and Aaron was the first high priest to serve under the law. The law showed that all people are guilty of sin and needed a mediator to speak to the Father for them. In contrast, Christ established a new covenant with His own blood. Hebrews 8:6 says, “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” The old covenant could only bring death. The new covenant brings eternal life to all who place their faith in Christ. As a result, the ministry of Christ is much greater than the ministry of Aaron.

As we help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand why Melchizedek was a much greater priest than Aaron, we equip them to explain to others why repentance and faith produce much better promises than the old covenant. Those promises include forgiveness of sins in the present and eternal life in the future. As our children come to fully understand these better promises, they will give our children great encouragement as they continue to grow in the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand why Melchizedek is greater than Aaron.