

THE KING OF SALEM – Part 2

Genesis 14:18b-20

INTRODUCTION

What do you think of when you hear the word “priest”?

→ Two guys with white half-sleeved shirts and thin black ties riding around on bicycles?

- Did you know they’re part of the Aaronic priesthood according to Mormon teaching?

→ Maybe when you hear the word “priest” you think of the president of the Mormon church?

- Did you know he’s part of the Melchizedek Priesthood according to Mormon teaching?
- Section 107 in The Doctrine and Covenants – *“There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic.... The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things.”*

→ Or maybe when you hear the word “priest” you think of the guys with backwards collars? The Roman Catholic priests.

Where did this manmade system of priests come from?

What does the New Testament Church look like?

As soon as the apostles passed from the scene, the early church began to lose key elements of biblical doctrine and practice.

Why? For one reason: Persecution started in A.D. 64 with Nero

- there were ten waves (emperors of Rome) of persecution: Nero ... Diocletian (worst)

Good Results of the Persecution:

- expansion of the church (when persecution, not extermination),
- purity (no hypocrites under fire), unity, morality

Bad Results of the Persecution: (among others)

- Hierarchy and Episcopacy - (people want leadership under trial)
After the apostles had passed away, additional offices began to be created to fill the vacuum
- Church Fathers: Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Cyprian all began to introduce additional offices and complication
- you can see the beginnings of error in the writings of some of these men
- they began to make a separation between the laity and the clergy that is not found in Scripture
- then Diocletian, the last and worst of the Roman Emperor persecutors, had 3 co-regents - one of these had a son who became Constantine the Great, who introduced another dangerous, more subtle shift → the marriage of church and state. The Emperor Constantine controlled the church and then merged the State and the Church.

In reality, the church moved from one danger - of persecution - to an even greater danger - a compromise of the truth in the areas of baptism, the Lord's Supper and even in the areas of an understanding of leadership in the Church, of priesthood.

The Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon began a distinction and hierarchy between the metropolitan bishops and the country bishops.

- Rome emerged at the top of the hierarchy mostly because it was the political capital of the world.
- systems of bishops over the elders and local pastors, archbishops, cardinals, and eventually popes
- spiritual, substantial, literal difference between clergy and laity

Personal illustration – I remember presenting the gospel to a group of folks at a group company dinner and a gal from Asia kept referring to me, respectfully, as “Father Clay.”

READ Gen 14:18-20

This section of the book of beginnings contains the first introduction of Salem/Jerusalem, the first combination of “bread and wine,” the first introduction of *El Elyon*, the first time man (God’s man on earth) blesses man, the first mention of tithe/offering, ... → and right at the center of it is the first mention of “**priest**” in Bible

This is also the first marriage of King and Priest - the marriage of righteousness and peace.

Central Statement: “^{18c} now he was a priest of God Most High.”

Abel, Noah, Job - all offered sacrifices prior to the time of Abram
Job 1:5 – the father acted as the priest for the family
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob offered sacrifices
• all before Moses, Aaron, and Levi

Proposition:

4 Qualities of this first Priesthood, the Priesthood of Melchizedek:

- I. Communal**
- II. Mediatorial**
- III. Universal**
- IV. Eternal**

First Quality of the Priesthood of **Melchizedek** ...

- I. Communal**

Point – Communion definition:

- 1) Lord’s Table;

- 2) The sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially on a spiritual level

Important first introduction of priesthood - of Abram and Melchizedek → as equals!

- Brothers before the Lord

Proof – “^{18b}**brought out bread and wine;**”

Practical aspect – Abram’s troops need rations (post-battle)

Spiritual aspect – they share a fellowship meal together

What did they talk about? I wonder if **Melchizedek** and **Abram** were talking about God’s promise in the Garden?

→ Encouragement! Fellowship! Worship!

Now recognize that this is a meeting of the two greatest men in the Old Testament.

1) Abraham is “the father of all who believe;”

2) **Luke 16:22** – “Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.”

Heb 7:3-7 – “... ⁷But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.”

What happens when two great men meet? What is said?
Sometimes, there is conflict. Sometimes there is competition.

Personal illustration – early in my days in Tae Kwon Do, at the studio there were two advanced black belts. They were both friends with my instructor and when they sparred it wasn’t real friendly. I asked my instructor why they don’t seem to get along and he replied, “sometimes you just can’t have two wild dogs in the same room.”

Not so here! → This is encouragement! This is fellowship! This is worship!

Illustration – the point of small groups (mutual edification). Bible hour (another one will be starting – details to come later).

Rom 1:9-12 → Fellowship!

Rom 14:19 – “So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” → Encouragement

NOTE: The combination “**bread and wine**” is not mentioned much in the rest of the Old Testament. But we can hardly miss that “**bread and wine**” are the components of the Lord’s Supper.

Transition - Moves from the horizontal to the vertical... from equals to a lesser and a greater.

Second Quality of the Priesthood of **Melchizedek** ...

II. Mediatorial

Point – How can I stand in the presence of a holy God? I am a sinful man. I need someone to intercede between me and God.

In light of what we have seen so far in Gen 1-14, how?

We have a problem. God is holy. We are not → death, separation.

I need someone to stand between me and God.

The solution God gives is a priest. Man needs a priest.

Priest – !heko – (first mention) – represented the people before God

Proof – **Gen 14:19-20** – “**And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tenth of all.**”

Point – Now there are two functions of Melchizedek - they are also two proofs for the mediatorial role of the priest of the Most High God

- **gives** on behalf of God and **receives** on behalf of God

First function (proof) of Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God

A. **Gives** on behalf of God

Point – He dispenses good to God’s people, on behalf of God.

Proof – Gen 14:19-20a – “**And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’**”

Man blessing man (first time) → IMPORTANT

- God’s man on earth – mediator
- The greater (**Melchizedek**) blesses the lesser (**Abram**) – Heb 7:7

“**possessor of heaven and earth**” → God is the Creator and Possessor of them all

“**Who has delivered your enemies into your hand**”

Point – The battle and the victory belong to the Lord

“**delivered**” – Moses uses the same root word as “shield” in 15:1

Josh 23:10 – “One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you.”

2 Chr 32:7-8 (Hezekiah) – “Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. ⁸With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.”

1 Sam 17:45-47 – “Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. ⁴⁶This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and He will give you into our hands.’”

Prov 21:31 – “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But victory belongs to YHWH”

Application - Ps 20:7 – “Some boast in chariots, and some in horses; But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.”

Illustration – R.A. Torrey –The Power Of Prayer – “*We do not live in a praying age. We live in an age with hustle and bustle; of man’s efforts and man’s determination; of man’s confidence in himself and in his own power to achieve things. An age of human organization and human machinery and human push, and human scheming, and human achievement, which in the things of God means no real achievement at all. What we need is not so much some new organization, some new wheel, but the spirit of the living creature in the wheels we already possess.*”

Second function (proof) of Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God

B. Receives on behalf of God

Proof – Gen 14:20b – “**And he gave him a tenth of all.**”

What is **Abram** saying as his herdsmen separate a “**tenth**” of all his cattle and sheep and donkeys and camels and grapes and olives and wheat, and gives it all to **Melchizedek** who takes it all back to **Salem**?

Abram is declaring that everything he owns belongs to the God of **Melchizedek**, whom they both worship.

Illustration – Contrast with Abram’s reaction to the King of Sodom → I don’t want any of your people. I don’t want any of your stuff. Go back to Sodom.

I want people to know it is the “LORD Most High” who has made me rich ... not a Sodomite.

Application – Many professing believers dutifully pay their tribute to the alluring sounds of Sodom. Because many think they are winning the economic war by their own skill and hard work.

Believers may occasionally cast a “tip” in God’s direction, but there is no real worshipful sacrifice made.

Beloved, do we feel the weight of gratitude toward the One who is ultimately responsible for all of our wealth?

This is not an issue of legislation or legalism on the part of **Abram**. Rather, this is an issue of loyalty and love.

Communal, Mediatorial, ...

Third Quality of the Priesthood of **Melchizedek** ...

III. Universal

Point – This first priesthood is for all the peoples

Universal ... rather than national!

The first priesthood to which the original audience is introduced is the universal priesthood for all peoples. They are introduced by this man coming out of nowhere, with no credentials.

- This Canaanite who is not part of the line of father Abraham. God gives the nation of Israel, second generation out of the

exodus from Egypt, the universal priesthood of Melchizedek before the priesthods of Levi or Aaron

For the **Israelite**, the priesthood was all about nationality and genealogy.

Ezra 2:61-62 – “And of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and he was called by their name. ⁶²These searched among their ancestral registration, but they could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood.”

But the only “nationality” Melchizedek has is Canaanite.

Proof – Melchizedek refers to God as “God Most High” – *El Elyon* – 3 times in 3 verses (18-20)

Now, remember **Abram**’s words in **14:22** – “Abram said to the king of Sodom, ‘I have sworn to the LORD God Most High,’”

- literally, “I have **raised my hand** to *YHWH El Elyon*”

Melchizedek doesn’t refer to God with His name *YHWH*.

Abram is the lesser before God.

Melchizedek is the greater before God.

How is it that the lesser uses *YHWH*, but the greater doesn’t??

→ Because the universal priesthood is greater than the national priesthood.

This circles all the way back around in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews – **Heb 7:8-10**

- In book of Hebrews, the author takes Christ’s priesthood and jumps over Aaron and Levi by jumping back to **Melchizedek**.
- The author of Hebrews is writing to the Hebrew Christians and elevating Christ as the mediator of a better covenant.

Application – Powerful evangelism for the Jews! Tell them to go back. Your father Abraham recognized someone greater than him.

- Someone outside of Israel.
- Abraham recognized a Canaanite without any genetic credentials.

The Priesthood of Melchizedek is **Communal**, The Priesthood of Melchizedek is **Mediatorial** and **Universal**, ...

Fourth Quality of the Priesthood of **Melchizedek** ...

IV. Eternal **Gen 14:**

We are really jumping forward here.

Point – The first priesthood to which the original audience is introduced is by this unknown man coming out of nowhere.

- No genealogy
- No background
- No heritage

A priest is a mediator, an interceder and an interlocutor.

This begs the question:

For whom did **Melchizedek** intercede?

Who recognized his priesthood?

Who ordained him?

Where in the world did he come from?

We simply don't have the answers. In fact, God specifically leaves it open for a marvelous reason ... →**Hebrews!**

Proof – ... What's missing? What is not here??

In a book filled with genealogies, there is none for Melchizedek. It is conspicuous by its absence.

Turn to: Heb 7:3 - “Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.”

- There is a human being named Melchizedek who was a prefigurement of Jesus. He died back then but his priesthood is universal and eternal.
- Heb 7:25 - describing the priesthood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
- because this priesthood is communal, mediatorial, universal and eternal

Application – Because He is our Great High Priest, we are able to draw near to God with confidence → **Heb 4:14-16**

- **that is a consequence of this priesthood of Melchizedek**

CONCLUSION

Melchizedek is not just a Priest ...

He is a **King-Priest** – King of Righteousness, King of Peace

Heb 7:14 - “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.”

- the priests came from Levi
- the kings (throne) came from Judah

Ps 110:1-4 - second and only other mention of Melchizedek in the Old Testament

110:1-3 - clear reference to Davidic Covenant - kingship of the Messiah

110:4 - priest according to the order of Melchizedek

Staggering!

Why Melchizedek is the most important Old Testament person:

- Priest and King
- Jesus takes people to God and Jesus rules over people as God.

When Christ penetrated the realm of humanity, He came as **King**. He came as **Priest** ... And He came as **Savior**.

Rev 20:6 - “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

