



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 7:1–10; Genesis 14:17–20

“Melchizedek and Jesus Christ: Part III”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we come to Thee with anticipation as we think, again, of the word of God. We thank Thee for this great Epistle of the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the fact that the thoughts that are set forth in time within it are thoughts that Thou hast had in the ages of eternity, and when we reflect, Lord, upon the fact that the great historical events of thousands of years ago were framed by Thee to represent these marvelous truths that have now come to pass, we marvel at the inspiration of Holy Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing to us and to our attention, with a divine teacher, the great truths of human history, and not only of human history but of human prophecy and the anticipations of human eternity lying ahead, by the virtue of what Christ has done. We thank Thee for the blood that was shed, for the atoning work. We praise Thee for the presence of the Holy Spirit and, Lord, we pray that he may teach us concerning Christ in this hour.

We pray, in His name. Amen.

[Message] Well, we are spending a little extra time on Hebrews chapter 7, and the subject of “Melchizedek and Jesus Christ,” for the simple reason that, I think, that it is important for us to understand it if we are to understand this great epistle.

Let me just, again, introduce it with some of the similar things that we have been talking about. Three significant things in our author’s thinking about man’s relationship to God are found in this great epistle; our relationship with God is by covenant, by priesthood, and by sacrifice. Jesus Christ is God’s mediator, the priest and the offering, and the only way to God, as our author with others makes plain by the 25th verse. “Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” “Those that come unto God by Him,” are those that have the promised blessings.

And then his priesthood is said to be after the order of Melchizedek and that, of course, is what we have been laboring to make plain. Back in chapter 5 in verse 10, at the conclusion of the section on the qualifications for the priesthood, he spoke of Jesus Christ as being “called of God, a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.” And then he launched into a lengthy warning, an admonition, and with marvelous, masterful, literary skill under the inspiration of the Spirit, he closed the warning with the same thing that he had said at the beginning of it, chapter 5 verse 10, where he says, “Whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”

Now, we have tried to study the historical section; we looked last time at the Psalm, Psalm 110, which is the section in which, in a hymnic way, the author turns to the truth concerning Melchizedek. And now in chapter 7, we have the lengthy exposition of the author, which we will call typical. So in history, we have seen Melchizedek coming out of the invisible, timeless past. We know nothing about him. He just, suddenly, appeared and Abraham paid him tithes. So he comes out of the invisible, timeless past, he blesses Abraham, moves on into the timeless future, and so far as the Scriptures are concerned, Melchizedek still lives.

In prophecy, in Psalm 110, we have seen David’s great divine human king, you remember, it began, “The Lord said unto my Lord, ‘Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.’” And then in the 4th verse, “The Lord has sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.”

And so in prophecy, we’ve seen the great divine human king, who shall conquer the rebel kings of the earth and majestically rule, and he, too, likened to the priest-king Melchizedek; priest after the order of Melchizedek, a king-priest.

Now, in type in chapter 7, we shall see that his life was divinely intended to foreshadow the offices of God’s great Messiah. Hebrews expounds the connection.

Now, you cannot look at something like this and fail to see the evidence of divine inspiration. Think about it. Two thousand years before the time of Christ, Abram is suddenly met by this priest-king, Melchizedek. His name was Melchizedek, king of righteousness, king of Salem, with no explanation of his background, anything like that. He appears on the scene, after Abraham’s victory, brings bread and wine, and Abram tithes him. He blesses Abraham and Abram pays him tithes. That’s remarkable. Then, he passes off the scene and nothing, for one thousand years more, is found in Scripture about Melchizedek. And in a sense, suddenly, as you’re reading along in the psalms, and those of you that are reading through the Bible, you know, there is quite a distance between Genesis and the Psalms. I know you want to know where I am. Don’t you? [Laughter] Well, I think, I’m on my second way through, I believe I’m in 2 Kings or just right at it. But anyway, here a thousand years later, we suddenly have the Psalmist saying, “Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” And then a thousand years passes and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews picks up on those two instances; three verses in Genesis, one in Psalm 110, and devotes a great part of this magnificent discourse to the way in which our Lord Jesus Christ is like Melchizedek or vice versa.

Think about it for a moment and, I think, you’ll see what a great argument for divine inspiration it is, that we should have these single, almost single, instances of a man appearing, appearing twice, and then in the New Testament so much is made over him. And, in fact, our Lord’s priestly ministry is according to the order of Melchizedek. You can see how the Holy Spirit was superintending Moses, as he wrote, and as a matter of fact, was ordering Melchizedek and Abram, when they met, and the things that they did; The things that Melchizedek were under the inspiration

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. You can see David, perhaps, having conquered the Jebusite stronghold, which would have been somewhat related to Melchizedek, because he was king of Salem. The thoughts of Melchizedek must have entered into his mind. And, we have that magnificent psalm, one of the greatest of the Psalms, all agree, Psalm 110, and now the spirit of God has moved the author of Hebrews, to write this marvelous chapter and unfold the greatness of the Son of God, as our king-priest.

Well, now, we are going to look at a few things that we have not looked at, and then we'll go on to verse 10. And, first of all, we want to talk about the similarities of Melchizedek's priesthood to Christ.

Notice, chapter 7 begins, “For.” He's just said, “Whether the forerunner for us has entered for us, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. For,” that is, “To explain, to explain.

“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 by interpretation “king of righteousness,” and after that also king of Salem, which is “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without descent, [very important], having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.”

I want to ask you a question; suppose you were, didn't know anything much about this, let's suppose you went into, you knew something about the Bible but you didn't know the Epistle to the Hebrews, let's suppose you went into a Bible class like this, and let's suppose the person who was giving the biblical exposition, should suddenly turn to the character Melchizedek in the Old Testament, and Melchizedek in that one verse, and then expound it as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews does? What would you think? If you didn't have Hebrews, what would you think about a

man who took three verses out of Genesis 14, one verse out of Psalm 110, and then constructed an exposition of the likeness of that person, Melchizedek, to Jesus Christ?

I think I know what you would say. You would say, “What bizarre exegesis.” Now, if you wouldn’t say that, I know scholars say that, because that’s precisely what has been said about this -- that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has engaged in some of the most bizarre exegesis. *Etrange*, a French word for bizarre, exegesis for the word of God and has engaged in things that could not possibly be called good hermeneutics. But, we of course, familiar with the Epistle to the Hebrews, it doesn’t strike us as it would strike someone who for the first time heard this likeness made. And there are some very interesting things that he does. These three verses are an introduction to the fuller exposition that follows and they make one major point. And the one major point is Melchizedek and Jesus Christ have similar offices. Both are priests, both are royal priests.

Now, let’s look at some of the things; some of the ways in which they are similar, we might say.

First of all, they are similar in the length of their priesthood. Now, you know, of course, Jesus Christ, as the eternal Son of God and, of course, if he is to be priest, he’s an eternal priest. But in what way could we say that Melchizedek is representative of an eternal priest? Well, look again at what he says. “This Melchizedek, king of Salem,” now, I’m just going to skip over everything until the end of verse 3, because the verb is there. We’re talking about the subject in verse 1, but the verb is found in verse 3. “This Melchizedek abideth a priest continually.” That’s the statement. “This Melchizedek abideth a priest continually.” The verb is found in verse 3, the subject in verse 1. So what he says then is that Melchizedek is a continually acting priest or an eternal priest. The Psalm said, “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” That’s the clue to our author’s thinking. He got his theology from Psalm 110, which he knew had to do with Christ. And there it was said of Christ, “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” So he went back, now, to look at Melchizedek, to see how, why, the Psalmist David, said, that Christ is

High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. There must be something in Genesis that enabled the writer of the Psalm, to find in Melchizedek an illustration of an eternal priest.

Now, I must say, maybe I'm not communicating too well to you, but I find this to be quite a task; to find in Melchizedek and the three verses that are there, evidence that he was an eternal priest. Well, of course, I know the truth now. But I would have found it rather difficult because all that we read is that Melchizedek appeared on the scene. Blessed Abram! Abram paid him tithes. And he passed off the scene; nothing else was ever heard about him thereafter. That seems a very thin reed upon which to build the eternity of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Well, as I say, it depends on Psalm 110, verse 4. And so he would have to find it here. You know, if you look at this, you might think, well, what was Melchizedek? Was he even a person? It says here, “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” Was he an angel? Or was he an apparition? With no flesh and blood? Is that all he was? Without father? Without mother? Without beginning of days? Without end of life? It is *etrange* exegesis, you might think.

Now, some people have sought to get around this by simply saying, it's a theophany. Melchizedek was a theophany, an appearance of God, an appearance of Jesus Christ, before he came in his incarnation.

Now, we know there are theophanies in the Old Testament. We have them in the book of Genesis; and we have them in other place in the Old Testament, in the Judges, in Gideon's case, in Samson's case, in the case of Abraham, of course, and Daniel. So theophanies are biblical appearances of the divine being. They were to prepare Israel for the incarnation that was to come. But, in this case, it seems incompatible because in the case of the theophanies, a theophany would be incompatible with an historical designation, and he's called king of Salem, king of Jerusalem. So that would argue against it being a theophany, because he's limited to one particular place; king of Salem.

Furthermore, this expression, in verse 3, “made like unto the Son of God,” is an expression that refers to a facsimile or a copy. And the very fact that we say, “having been made like unto the

Son of God,” would seem very plainly to say that it could not be the Son of God. He’s made “like” the Son of God.

When I was going through theological seminary, one of the professors, who’s now with the Lord, told us of an illustration he had when he was preaching in Memphis. And he was in a hotel room and, as many of us preachers do, when we are traveling and preaching somewhere else, he had on one of the desks in the room in the morning, he had his Bible and some other things laying out there. And the hotel maid came in to clean up the room, she happened to look over and see his Bible and a few of his notes, and she asked him, was he a preacher. And he said, “Yes, I am.” And then she said, “Well, perhaps you can tell me something. Yesterday at church, I was listening to our minister and he was talking about Melchizedek, and he was speaking about how he was related to Jesus Christ in some ways.” And she said, “Frankly, I just did not understand what in the world he was talking about and do you think you could explain it to me?” And so the teacher said he went through a bit of exposition and then he came to this statement, “made like unto the Son of God.” And he emphasized it. And then she said, “Oh, it says ‘made like unto the Son of God.’ I think I see it. You cannot be like something, what you already are.” [Laughter] In other words, if you are that, you cannot be said to be like that. I could not be said to be “like” Lewis Johnson if I am Lewis Johnson. And so when it says “made like unto the Son of God,” it’s evident that this is not a theophany.

So as a matter of fact, it was interesting, I heard him give this little incident in his life and later on, I was reading one of the books on Hebrews, and an ancient bishop, who lived in the 4th century, by the name of Epiphanius, in one of his comments, with reference to this, makes the statement that this could not be a theophany. And his exact words are, in a work on heresy, “How then could he be said to be ‘like to Himself.’” So it’s almost as if that maid, in the hotel room, had the same insight that Epiphanius the well-known bishop had, who lived in Salamis in Cyprus.

So what we then have is an individual, who is said to be like Jesus Christ, but he is not a theophany, he is a historical character who lived at a particular time in the past, two thousand years before the time of Christ, was king of Salem, and met Abram as he returned from that victory.

Now, in what sense can we say that he is similar to Christ? Well, look at the statement in verse 3. “Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” Now, if he’s not a theophany, and he’s not an angel, but he’s a man who is located in Salem, in what way could he be said, described like this, to be made like the Son of God. Well, look.

“Without father.” Did Melchizedek have a father? Well, yes, because he was a man. Did he have a mother? Why, of course, he was born as you and I are born. He was king of Salem, a historical character. How could he then be said to have no father and no mother? Well, there’s one way. If we’re talking about how Melchizedek appears in the book of Genesis, that might make sense because what’s characteristic of the book of Genesis? Those of you that are reading through the Bible this year, some of you are probably half way through Genesis by now, and if you read through Genesis, what’s characteristic of Genesis? Genealogies, isn’t it? Constantly, you run into genealogies, it seems. And so here is a man who has no genealogy, but he’s a character in Genesis. So, I think, we have a clue of what he is saying is in Genesis, Melchizedek, doesn’t have a father. In Genesis, he doesn’t have a mother. “Having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” No reference made to his beginning, no reference made to his death.

I’ve been underlining, by the way, off and on, ways in which these old men died, because I’m so soon going to die, relatively speaking. I’m not setting the date, mind you, but I just happened to know my age and I see these things. “Being full of days, he died.” And I’m underlining through. I may have to get up a message on that one of these days, the various ways in which the Bible describes the death of old men. Wouldn’t that be interesting? I might include death of old ladies, too, because [Laughter] there are some who also are mentioned in there, too.

So, anyway, without father, without mother, without, now wait, here’s something. “Without beginning of days or end of life, but without descent.”

Let me say this, let me put it this way, my Bible has a little note that says, points to the word genealogy, “without genealogy.” Now, that’s the important word. Do you know why? Because every Aaronic priest was a priest, simply because he had a genealogy. If you didn’t have a genealogy, you couldn’t be a Levitical priest. And, you remember, in the Old Testament, there are some instances where individuals who were Levites, but after some experiences that they had, and they tried to enter in among the priestly people, they couldn’t show their proper genealogy. They had one; they just couldn’t show it, it was lost in the things that had happened in the years. And they were refused their rightful place because they didn’t have a genealogy.

Now, here is an individual who didn’t have a genealogy. So what could he not have been? Well, he could not have been a Levitical priest. Isn’t that interesting? This man could not have been a Levitical priest. But, Abram gave him tithes. What does that tell you? Abraham paid tithes to the Melchizedekian priesthood. Now, Abram, our passage will go on to say, had as a descendant, Levi. Didn’t he? That’s what he says. So what does that say? That says the Levitical priesthood paid tithes to the Melchizedekian priesthood and, furthermore, received a blessing from the Melchizedekian priesthood. And our author will say, without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better. In other words, Melchizedek blessed Abram. Abram is the progenitor of the Levitical priesthood, the Levitical priesthood is, therefore, subordinate to the Melchizedekian priesthood.

Isn’t that interesting? That’s what this author finds. Back here, in the timeless past, so to speak, there is an acknowledgement of the fact that the Levitical priesthood is not the ultimate priesthood. There is another priesthood. All Jewish people should know that. All Jewish people should know that. There is a priesthood greater than the Levitical priesthood.

So our author says, “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 Abraham gave a tenth part of all.” He was, by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that, also, king of Salem, which is king of peace. In Genesis, appearing, “without father, without mother, without genealogy,

having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto,” a copy of, “the Son of God,” in that sense, “he abides a priest continually.”

Melchizedek’s a living man. He’s a living man right now according to Genesis. We have no indication of his birth, no indication of his death, he’s still living, in type, as a type. This is the only way you can represent an eternal priest, isn’t it? I say only, I don’t know whether I can rule out anything else. But this is certainly magnificent and we would have to say, I don’t know of any other way anyone could so marvelously turn to Scripture and show how Melchizedek typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s just astonishing.

There are other things about the two, of course. Melchizedek is a mystery, isn’t he? Wouldn’t you like to know something about Melchizedek? Wouldn’t you like to know where he was born? How he grew up? Who he played with when he was a child? How big he was? How strong he was? Who his friends were? And his wife; wouldn’t you like to know his wife and who married them? How many people were at the church when they were married? All of those kinds of things, wouldn’t you like to know those things? There’s a whole mystery surrounds Melchizedek. He just appears and then he parts. David then mentions him in one verse and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews talks about how Christ is like him, or he is made like Christ.

What a mystery? What a mysterious character? Why, even in that he’s like Christ? Because our Lord is a mysterious character too. What about the ages of eternity? Before the incarnation? What about the worship of the angelic beings? What about the countless ages of the past? What characterizes the activity of the living Son of God? And now, at the present, in heaven, receiving again the worship of the angelic hosts, all of the things that characterize our Lord have the aspect of mystery, too. And when you think of his being as a Tod-man, that too has the greatest of spiritual, theological mystery about it. And then, if you think of the Triune God—Father, Son and Spirit—mystery characterizes them, as well, in the sense that they are infinite persons. Our God is an infinite God; and we are finite. We are finite! And so we can never understand fully the Godhead. We can never understand our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ fully, though we will bow before his feet, see him

face to face, rejoice in his presence for the ages of eternity. But there will always be an aspect of his person, and being that is a *mystery* a secret, to us.

In fact, isn't that what, in one of the theophanies, our Lord tells the person to whom he appears. “My name is,” what? Secret! So, so how is Melchizedek like Christ? Well, they have a similar length in priesthood. As far as Genesis is concerned, Melchizedek is an eternal priest. As far as our Lord is concerned, we know from specific Scripture, he is a priest forever. They are similar in name. Melchizedek! *Melek* means king, in Hebrew. *Tsedeq* means righteousness. King of righteousness. King of peace.

Now, notice the order: righteousness, peace. Righteousness then peace, the order is proper. Similar names, our Lord Jesus Christ is a Melchizedek, a king of righteousness, a king of peace. In fact, one can see these things right in Genesis, chapter 3, when God deals with Adam. When God deals with Adam, he deals with Adam in righteousness and Adam is judged for his sin. But he deals, also, with Adam in peace, in the sense that he gives him the promise of the redeemer to come, who will crush the head of the serpent, and then illustrates it by the coats of skins which he places upon Adam and Eve. So king of righteousness, king of peace; there is no peace apart from the satisfaction of the righteous claims of God and so our Lord Jesus Christ is the King of Righteousness, the King of Peace, the King of Righteousness and satisfies the claims of divine law against you and against me, for we are sinners, pays the penalty for those whom he is to save, and then, peace becomes theirs. As Paul says, “We are justified and because we are justified by faith, we have peace with God.” So a similar name, our Great Melchizedek, our Great King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

It would be terrible, of course, if we had a Savior who had not satisfied all of divine justice, wouldn't it? In fact, “it would be a greater calamity to have a God who was unjust, than it would for me to be lost,” so Charles Haddon Spurgeon said. Because, if we have a God who has not satisfied the claims of righteousness, we are not safe and secure. There are many ways in which we try to find peace, we try to find peace by escaping from the problems of life or evading the problems of life, or

making compromise. But our Lord, of course, faces the need of satisfying the righteousness and holiness of God and he accomplishes that magnificent work. He weaves, by his marvelous, saving work, a perfect righteousness for all who believe in him.

When I look out over this audience and I see all of you in the audience, and I know many of you, most of you, I know as being Christians, and I think of what God has done for you and what he has done for me, and the marvelous work that he’s done, how blessed we are! The righteousness that he has woven as a perfect garment, about those whom he has loved and whom he has died for.

And then, thirdly, his priesthood is like Melchizedek’s in that it has a similar basis. It’s not genealogical; Melchizedek is not a priest because he belongs to a certain order. As a matter of fact, in Melchizedek’s case, the whole order is comprised by one man, and our Lord is that kind of priest. So our Lord is not a priest because he descends from somebody. Melchizedek is not a priest because he descends from somebody. Their priesthood is not genealogical because it’s designed to represent eternity, no descent.

Now, I want to say a few words about the superiority of Melchizedek’s priesthood and we’ll start with verse 4, where he says, “Now consider.” That’s a marvelous statement when you think about it, because our author has probably done this as well as it can be done by human beings; and now he calls upon us to consider how great this man was. Consider; give attention to; set your mind upon.

Consider how great this man was unto whom even the patriarch Abram, or Abraham, gave the tenth of the spoils. That’s the first thing that marks him out as great.

Because Abraham is the father of the faithful. In fact, not a one of you sitting in this audience, who is to obtain salvation, has obtained it apart from Abraham. Did you know that? You have obtained it by virtue of the covenant that was made with Abraham, which our Lord came as the mediator of, and confirmed it, ratified it, and the blessings of it were extended to all who believe as Abraham believed.

So everybody who has become a Christian, has become a Christian through Abraham. That is, through our Lord's dealings with Abraham. Do you get that? That's so important to understand. We still live under the Abrahamic Covenant. Read Galatians. Read Romans, for that matter.

So he tithed Abraham. That's the first evidence of the superiority of Melchizedek. And Abram is the one through whom we receive eternal life; that is, through God's dealings with him, through the covenant that God made with him. Remember, the unconditional covenant in which God said to Abram you are going to have a land, you're going to have descendants, and you're going to be the one in whom all the families of the earth are going to be blessed. The Gentiles, all the Gentiles who receive salvation receive Abrahamic Covenantal blessings. That's why we're called the children of Abraham, in the New Testament, more than once. So he tithed Abraham. So he was a superior person to Abraham, Melchizedek, according to our author's thinking.

Secondly, he blessed Abraham, that's what we read in verse 6, I believe, “But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.” Those promises in which our salvation is found. Abram has the promises.

Third, his priesthood is typically permanent. Notice verse 8, “And here men that die receive tithes, but there he receiveth them of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.” He is living, according to Scripture. Living! So the author says, “He liveth.” As I say, the whole Melchizedekian order of priesthood was filled by one man. One man! That's the way our Lord's priesthood is! The eternal priest. Who's in his order? No one! He's “the” eternal priest. Are you getting what I'm talking to you about? He is the eternal priest. There are no other eternal priests. See in Melchizedek's case, just as in, did I say, “You see,” I sound like Wilford. He loves to say, “You see.”

But when we talk, then, about the typically permanent priesthood, we're talking about one reality of the Lord Jesus Christ; one type, Melchizedek, who himself fills the whole order of their priesthood. Melchizedek and our Lord, are like a portrait. When you look at a portrait, it's always the same.

By the grace and kindness of Bob Campbell, I have in my living room a portrait. And he gave it with a very great compliment, which is not true, but, nevertheless, I have now a picture in the living room. Martha wanted to put it in the living room. She won the argument, as usual, and put it in the living room and it's a picture of John Owen. I greatly admire Owen. Bob Campbell said, “You remind me a lot of John Owen.” John Owen lived in the 17th Century and I didn't realize I looked that old. [Laughter] But, nevertheless, I acknowledge that as a complement that I am like him, I hope I would be like him in some other ways, too.

But, John Owen's face is the same. It hasn't changed. It's the same person. And there are lots of pictures, you know, when you go in various places, and you look at the picture. And you can walk over, if it's hanging on that wall, you can walk over here and the person in the picture is looking right at you. If you walk over there, the person in the picture is looking right at you. And if you walk there, the person in the picture is looking at you. And you go over there, and he's looking at you. Or she's looking at you. And it almost seems as if the person in the portrait has changed but the same. And the priesthood of Melchizedek is typically permanent. There is just one such priest. Our Lord; there is just one such priest. And so, he's an illustration of the permanence of our Lord's priesthood.

And then, finally, fourth and this is astonishing. This has puzzled a lot of people in verses 9 and 10, he says, and as I may so say, “Levi, also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.” Isn't that interesting? “Paid tithes in Abraham.” So Levi, who hadn't even been born, when Abraham gave that tenth to Melchizedek, Levi, who hadn't been born, he paid tithes in Abraham. That's what he says. “He paid tithes in Abraham.”

Now, is that hard for you to understand? Let me read you something I read just this afternoon, for the first time. One idea, threading its way through all Hebrew thought is that the act of the progenitor has consequences on posterity. In Adam, all die.

Now, as you know, Paul in Romans picks up on that and says all of us sinned in Adam. That is, we were there, and we sinned in Adam. He goes on to say, “In Adam all die as the first of a

long series. Thus what Abraham did, good or bad, his progeny did. When Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek and received a blessing, he was recognizing in worship the superior greatness of the priest-king of God, yea, even more, he was worshipping the Most High God of this priest-king. And with Abraham’s worship went that of all his descendants, including Aaron and his sons.”

Carrying it to extreme, he gave Melchizedek a tithe and in giving the tithe, he worshipped him. That’s what you do when you give money to the Lord, because all belongs to the Lord. And you give it in expression of your worship to the Lord. But, our author here says, not only did he do it, but his descendants did it as well, at least, in typical form. All of his descendants worshipped by Abraham’s tithe, when Abraham gave it to Melchizedek. Isn’t that interesting?

This author has thought very deeply about that, and the idea that he is speaking about, about the consequences of the progenitor affecting the posterity, that is a biblical thing, it’s called representation, it’s called covenantal relationship, and the Bible is filled with it. And, in fact, that’s the whole point of the saving work of the Lord Jesus; that he represents you and me when he shed his blood and affirmed, ratified, the New Covenant; He did it for all those who were in him, in the mind of God. As Paul says in Ephesians, in 2 Timothy chapter 1, “This entire work of the Lord Jesus Christ had it’s beginning in eternity past, when God worked in Him.”

Now, let me close with the super imminence of Melchizedek’s anti-type. “Consider how great this man was.” That’s interesting. Do you have a Bible that has the italics? I have the King James edition here, and that’s in italics. That means that’s not in the original text. In other words, there’s no “past tense” of the verb, “to be,” no imperfect. But, that has been supplied by the translators. Now, it’s perfectly all right to say, “Consider how great this man was.” But, it’s also true that he doesn’t say “was,” he says simply, “Consider how great this man” and then we have to supply a word. And so we can supply this, “How great he was,” “Is,” “shall be.” As far as Scripture is concerned, he still lives. So consider the greatness of Melchizedek as a type, an illustration, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, we don't see a whole lot about Melchizedek in the Bible. Very little is said about him, but, I think, it's right to say that there is nothing little about him, this majestic figure, to whom Abram paid tithes, from whom he received blessing. He is a marvelous illustration of the eternal king-priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Spurgeon uses some very interesting figures. He speaks of him as “a mighty crag among the mountains,” “a lone Alp,” sort of like one of those, like the Matterhorn, which rises up above everything around it, “His brow, suaved in the clouds, sublime, a tremendous figure of this great man, of the Old Testament, whose greatness lies, ultimately, in the way in which he pictures the Lord Jesus Christ. The type is great, but the anti-type, of course, is the real thing and far greater.”

His greatness, historically? Why, we could look back at our Lord's life and expound for the remainder of this day. I believe I could do that. For the remainder of this day, expound the greatness of Melchizedek's anti-type; his deity, his humanity, the states of his incarnation, his birth, his baptism, temptation, his ministry, his death, his burial, his resurrection, his session at the right hand of the Father, at the present time. To expound all of these things would be like holding a candle to the sun of the eternal Son. The blaze, blinds us. The things that we say about the Son of God, we can say them in the most beautiful way in the English language and in the reality of it, they are just the lisplings of someone who's trying to say something that he cannot really, fully explain. I cannot do it.

And almost all of the men whose writings I like, admit that that's characteristic of all of us who try to speak about our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. What could we do to magnify his greatness. His greatness is, typically, in the context: the important points are his royalty, Melchizedek is a king-priest. Our Lord is a priest who is a king, the ultimate king; King of Kings, Lord of Lord's, son of David, ruling upon the Davidic throne, the eternal throne.

His eternity? Well, that we've talked about, and the universality of it, because remember Melchizedek was a Gentile, and standing as a Gentile, king-priest, representing our Lord Jesus Christ, in him, the universality of the priesthood of Jesus Christ is set forth. It was great to be a Levitical

high priest. That was part of God’s great plan. And he represents, in his functions, as we shall see, the functions of our Lord Jesus Christ, typically. But the priesthood that really blesses is the priesthood “after the order of Melchizedek.”

In the Old Testament, in Numbers chapter 6, we have the Aaronic blessing. I have been privileged, like all preachers, to be the officiating minister at weddings. I remember, many years ago, I was talking with a Southern Baptist preacher, and he and I were conducting Bible studies together, at the Gulf Bible Conference, in Mississippi, and he just made a casual comment. He said, with reference to marrying people, he said, “I don’t marry people. And the reason,” he said, “I don’t marry them is because I’m already married. But I do marrify them.” And so that’s the way the Southern Baptist preacher spoke of “marrifying.”

Well, I’ve marrified a lot of people, and at, on, my marrification ceremony at the end of it, I almost always cite the Aaronic blessing. It’s Numbers chapter 6, in verse 24 through verse 26.

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

And, that’s the Aaronic blessing. Now, analyze it for just a moment. We have just a few moments here. “The Lord bless thee and keep thee.” Well, of course, it is the part of the Son of God to bless us and to keep us. “The Lord make his face to shine upon thee,” and the face of our great God, that we know, is our Lord Jesus Christ. “The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” And that’s precisely what our Lord has done. The Aaronic blessing, which the priests offered, ultimately pointed on to someone greater than the Aaronic priests to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, may each one of us, as we’ve been talking about this, truly give him what belongs to him. The things that represent the greatness of him, who blesses us, by his atoning work. Perhaps

even in the figure of what we are talking about, give him the tithes. Give him the things that represent the things that belong, really, to Him.

Well, it's a magnificent thing that this author has done, in expounding Melchizedek, and that will conclude our study this evening. I hope I have not been too complicated or too esoteric, for you, and I hope you've grasped the point that Melchizedek was an individual who really lived; that he appears in Genesis in such a way that he affords us an example, an illustration, a type of eternal priest. And it's in that sense that the author makes these statements about him. The aim, of course, is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the word of God. We thank Thee for the greatness of it. We thank Thee for the magnificent skill that Thou didst give to this ancient author, unknown to us, who gave us by the Spirit's direction one of the great books of the word of God. We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon each one present. Above all, Lord, help us to know and benefit from the ministry of our great High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. Bless our expositions as we seek to explain the details of it in the text that lies ahead of us.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.