

February 17, 2019 -

Hebrews 7:1-10 - “Righteousness, the true path to Peace”

Introduction:

Jenny Smith was a young girl who once stood outside her small church in Philadelphia “because it was always too crowded.” She would whimper, “I can’t go to Sunday school”, as the pastor walk by her. He saw her poor appearance and shabby clothes and found her a spot in Sunday school. Little Jenny kept thinking of the children who had no place to come to Jesus. Two years later Jenny passed away in her poor rundown apartment in a housing project. Her parents called the kind hearted pastor and ask for him to handle the final details. Inside her purse was 57 cents and a note scribbled in a child handwriting which read, “This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday school. For two years she saved this love offering. When the pastor read this he knew what he had to do. Carrying this note and the little purse he got in the pulpit, he told the story of this unselfish love and devotion. He challenged his deacons to get busy and start raising money for a larger building.

A local newspaper caught wind of it. It published a story about this sweet little girl. A realtor read the story and offered a large parcel of land. The church could not afford it. So he offered it for 57 cents. Checks started coming in from all over the country. Within 5 years Jenny’s gift had multiplied to \$250,000, a huge sum of money at that time. Today Temple Baptist Church seats over 3300 people and not far is Temple University, where 1000’s of students are educated and trained. On January 18, 1892 a three-story house at 3403 North Broad Street was purchased and re-named Samaritan Hospital. The 20-bed hospital was designed to provide free care for those unable to afford payment, regardless of race, nationality or creed. In one of those rooms you will see the picture of a sweet face little girl whose 57 cents, made such a remarkable history. The Temple University and hospital are world famous, Jenny is obscure.

Abraham was famous, Melchizedek was obscure in fact even to this day he is a bit of a mystery person. Some of God’s greatest servants are obscure and humble people who don’t make the history books. To help us comprehend the superior priesthood of Christ the writer of Hebrews explains how Christ is our High Priest after Melchizedek.

I Peace is the fruit of Righteousness (7:1-2).

1. The description of Melchizedek is found in Genesis 14:18-20. The context is Abram's returning home after defeating the warring kings who had kidnapped his nephew Lot. All we know about Melchizedek comes out of two verses in the Old Testament and one book in the New Testament in three chapters. Let’s get a little background from Bible history.

There was an Elamite king named Chedorlaomer (*key door la o mare*) and he got together with three allied kings and raided this area. The battle between the foreign coalition of four kings against the local coalition of five kings takes place at the Valley of Siddim (14:3, 8), which is identified as the Dead Sea (14:3). He came over to Jordan, and he raided Trans-Jordan. Then he raided the Negev; and he defeated all these little city-states, (tribal states) as they were, around Jordan, including Sodom.

He defeated them and carried off a large number of captives, as well as Lot, Abraham's nephew. You remember that Lot had gone to live in Sodom. *Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.* Lot got carried away.

Now, news of this reached Abram at Mam-re. Abram decides he will put together an army of his own. So he gathered trained men and in a surprise attack freed Lot and chased them off. The Bible records that God bless Abram in Genesis 14:16, "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. The king of Sodom and King Melchizedek, who was the king of a Jebusite city called Salem come and meet Abram to bless him. He gave a tenth of the booty to King Melchizedek; we will discuss this more as we come to verse nine.

2. It is very interesting one thousand years later David writes a single line in Psalm 110. David conquered the Jebusite city called Salem and made this city his capital, Jerusalem. One thousand years later the writer of Hebrews uses the example of Melchisedec, the most mysterious person in the Bible, to explain the superior priesthood of Christ our broken peace between God and man.

3. In Hebrews chapter 7, we meet this Old Testament type of Christ; we call this typology. A type is an Old Testament picture of the person and work of Christ. For example, in the Old Testament, we read about a brazen serpent being lifted up, and all who looked upon the serpent were healed from the snakebites; and then we read in John chapter 3 that this is a picture of Jesus Christ; and it says, "**As the serpent was lifted up, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up, and those who look on Him in faith shall be healed from sin.**"

Now, keep in mind that types are always meager and weak illustrations, at best. A lamb measures of no comparison with the Lamb of God nor does a serpent rate a relationship to Jesus Christ realistically. They are merely simple pictures, meant to give us insight from an illustrative point of view; and we say, at the same time, that Melchizedek in no way deserves equality with Jesus Christ; but he does serve as a very interesting picture of Christ.

4. Like Christ, he was both priest and king. Salem is an ancient name for the city of Jerusalem. It is from the same Hebrew root as "shalom," which means "peace." The word "Jerusalem" means "city of peace." People have always looked for peace. Everywhere we look today, people are trying to find peace through money, success, relationships, drugs, entertainment, etc.

However, God's way for finding peace is the only one that works. The name Melchisedec means King of righteousness (7:2). So, he was the King of peace and righteousness. We can only experience peace through righteousness. Isaiah 32:17 expresses this fact," And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

Peace is not something we find or earn. It is the fruit of righteousness. That's why Jesus said, **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you** (Jn. 14:27) Jesus can give us peace because He is our High Priest who makes us righteous. Reference: **Acts 10:36 & Romans 5:1 & 14:17**

II Peace comes from Christ our High Priest 7:3-10).

1. In the Old Testament, a priest had to be from the Tribe of Levi and a descendant of Aaron. Therefore, priests were more concerned with physical genealogy than their holiness, so there were many corrupt priests.
2. The priesthood of Melchizedek had nothing to do with heredity, but with personal qualifications, thus is superior, because in Aaron priesthood, you got some bad priest from time to time. Now, when you come to Melchizedek, look at verse 3. It says, "**Without father, without mother, without descent.**" Does that mean the guy came from nowhere? No, it means in the record of Genesis, there is no indication of his genealogy. That is totally foreign to any Judaist king, totally foreign to any Judaist priests, who all base their rights on their genealogy.
3. Some have speculated this means Melchisedec was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ called a "Christophany" (Chris-tof -uh-nee). However, having no parents or genealogy doesn't necessarily mean he was eternal or came from nowhere. So, it probably means there is nothing recorded in the Old Testament about his parents, origin, or death. Since Melchisedec lived before Aaron, he had no priestly genealogy going back to Aaron. Therefore, he was without the required genealogy. If Melchisedec had lived under the Law, he would not have been allowed to serve as a priest, much less as the high priest.
4. Jesus, our High Priest, is also without the required genealogy because He is from the tribe of Judah. So, Jesus' high priesthood, like Melchisedec's, is based on God's appointment, not on heredity. Chapter 7 is really the main chapter in the epistle to the Hebrews, because it tackles the key question which concerned the Jews, and that was the question of priesthood... Jesus Christ, our mediator, makes us righteous... **2 Co. 5:21.**

The writer of Hebrews says Melchisedec's preeminence over the Levitical priesthood is proven by the fact Abraham paid tithes to him. Also, Melchisedec blessed Abraham and the less is blessed of the better (7:1, 7). Therefore, the writer explains that the Levites, who later collected tithes, paid a tithe to Melchisedec when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. This is because although Levi was not yet born, he was genetically in the *loins*, or seed, of his ancestor, his great-grandfather Abraham (7:9-10). Because Abraham gave tithes to him, Melchisedec is greater than Levi and the Levitical priesthood. This also clearly indicates tithing pre-dates the Law of Moses by more than 400 years.

Conclusion:

He presented to us five ways that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's.

First, it was a universal priesthood, and you'll remember that Aaron's was national. It includes Jew and Gentile - far broader than the Jewish term Jehovah.

Secondly, it was a royal priesthood. He was a priest king. Aaron's was subject to kings.

Thirdly, it was a righteousness and peace priesthood. Aaron's could not provide either righteousness or peace.

Fourth, it was a personal priesthood. It was based on Melchizedek's own character. Aaron's was based on descent and heredity and had nothing to do with character.

Fifth, it was an eternal priesthood, and Aarons was definitely limited by time.