

“Melchizedek” is the Son of God

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Christian interpreters have long been puzzled by the brief mention of Melchizedek in Genesis 14, his one-sentence mention in Psalm 110:4, and by the interpretation of those two texts by Paul in Hebrews 5 & 7. Most Christian commentators hold that Melchizedek was just a man and that he merely prefigured Christ, being a type or comparative figure since he was a “priest” of the true God, apart from the Levitical priesthood, just as Jesus Christ became our High Priest apart from the Levitical priesthood.

However, this interpretation runs up against some serious problems with that understanding in Hebrews. Paul’s interpretation requires that Melchizedek was still alive when Hebrews was written, and that Moses portrayed Him as “the Son of God.” Paul’s interpretation in Hebrews will be dealt with in the latter part of this article.

Melchizedek was first introduced by Moses in the following short account as being the one who confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant by His blessing.

Genesis 14:18-20

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.

David again referred to Melchizedek in Psalm 110, the very Psalm which is either quoted or alluded to in the New Testament more than any other Scripture, and which was used repeatedly by the Apostles to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

Psalm 110:1-7 LXX¹

1 A Psalm by David: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit out from my right [hand] until I should make your enemies a footstool of Your feet. 2 The Lord will send forth the rod of Your power out of Zion. And, You, take dominion in the midst of Your enemies! 3 With You is the

¹ My translation of Alfred Rahlfs Greek edition of the Septuagint

dominion in the day of Your power in the brilliance of the holy ones. I beget You² out from the bowels before the dawn!^{3 4}

*4 The Lord swore and will not relent, “**You are Priest until the age according to the Melchizedek arrangement.**”*

5 The Lord together-crushed kings out from your right [hand] in the day of His wrath.

6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fulfill [the number of] corpses, He shall together-crush the heads of many upon the land. 7 He shall drink of the brook in the way; because of this He will lift up the head.

Before addressing Paul’s interpretation of these passages in Hebrews in detail, we should consider a Jewish, pre-Christian, interpretation of Melchizedek. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 11Q13, written in Hebrew about a hundred years before Christ, has been called the “Melchizedek scroll” because it provides a previously unknown Jewish interpretation of just who Melchizedek was or is.

Modern scholars attempt to show that this scroll portrays Melchizedek as an angel even though the scroll never explicitly indicates this. Their argument centers on the fact that the scroll refers to Melchizedek by the term “Elohim” (God), and it also quotes Psalm 82:1 which states: “*God stands in the assembly of gods, and in the midst of gods He judges.*” They claim that “gods” here refers to angels, and since Melchizedek is also called “God” as the subject in this verse, and throughout the scroll, they deduce that the Jewish sect using the scroll believed Melchizedek was an angel.

The scroll portrays Melchizedek as a divine, heavenly being who met Abraham and who will judge both the righteous and the wicked, and even angels, who will usher in the Messianic Kingdom. In this document Melchizedek is portrayed as the one who will fulfill many well-known Messianic prophecies, including some that the New Testament attributes to Jesus Christ. Since the Jews themselves considered these prophecies to refer to the Messiah, it is virtually certain that the Jewish sect that used this scroll believed that the arrival of Messiah would be the return of Melchizedek. In other words, they believed in the preexistence of the Messiah, that He is the one who appeared to Abraham and confirmed the Covenant.

² Psalm 2:7 indicates that the Messiah was “begotten” on the day called “Today” which here is identified as before the dawn of day one.

³ Job 38:12 LXX places the ordering of the dawn at the beginning of creation. Thus the Messiah of Psalm 110 was begotten before the first dawn. Keep in mind that in the creation account and in biblical time reckoning, twelve hours of evening precedes the dawn and twelve hours of daytime, thus “...day one became evening and became morning” (Gen. 1:5 LXX).

⁴ The earliest Christians repeatedly used this statement to prove that the Son was begotten as the beginning of day-one of creation week.

The English translation of the Melchizedek scroll quoted in its entirety below is from “*The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*,” Géza Vermès. I have divided the translation into three sections for the purpose of commenting on each separately.

Section 1

“And concerning that which He said,

‘In [this] year of Jubilee [each of you shall return to his property’ (Lev. xxv, 13);

and likewise,

‘And this is the manner of release:] every creditor shall release that which he has lent [to his neighbour. He shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother], for God’s release [has been proclaimed]’ (Deut. xv, 2).

[And it will be proclaimed at] the end of days concerning the captives as [He said,

‘To proclaim liberty to the captives’ (Isa. lxi, 1).

*Its interpretation is that He] will assign them to the sons of heaven and to **the inheritance of Melchizedek**; f[or He will cast] their [lot] amid the po[r]tions of Melchize]dek, who will return them there and will proclaim to them liberty, forgiving them [the wrong-doings] of all their iniquities. And this thing will [occur] in the first week of the Jubilee that follows the nine Jubilees. And the Day of Atonement is the e[nd of the] tenth [[u]bilee, when all the Sons of [Light] and the men of the lot of Mel[chi]zedek will be atoned for. [And] a statute concerns them [to prov]ide them with their rewards. For this is the moment of **the Year of Grace for Melchizedek**. [And h]e will, by his strength, judge the holy ones of God, executing judgement,”*

The first two passages quoted, Leviticus 25:13 and Deuteronomy 15:2, refer to the Year of Release (Jubilee) which was to occur every 50th year. On the Year of Release, all debts were to be forgiven, and all land that had been sold must revert back to its original owner as it was divided by lot by Joshua. These two passages were not only seen as commandments for Israel to follow every 50 years, but were seen especially as prophetic of the ultimate “Year of Release” when the permanent fulfillment of the land inheritance

promised to Abraham would be realized.⁵ This is shown by the third passage cited in brief from Isaiah 61, which announces the coming of the Messiah to reign.

Isaiah 61:1-11 NKJV

1 *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, **To proclaim liberty** to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

2 ***To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,** And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,*

3 *To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”*

4 *And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.*

5 *Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, And the sons of the foreigner Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.*

6 *But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast.*

7 *Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.*

8 *“For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant.*

9 *Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they are the posterity whom the LORD has blessed.”*

10 *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

11 *For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

Verses 1-2 were not only quoted by Jesus, but He identified Himself as the Anointed one (Messiah) sent to preach the good news, to proclaim “Liberty” (Jubilee) to the captives,

⁵ This connection between the Jubilee year and the arrival of the Kingdom is important because the Jubilee was proclaimed every 50th year by the blowing of the shofar on the Day of Atonement, the 10th of Tishri. By making this connection, the inference is that the Kingdom would arrive on the Day of Atonement.

and to announce the “Year of the Lord” (the Year of Jubilee). This was “the Gospel of the Kingdom.” According to the Melchizedek scroll, what Isaiah calls “*the acceptable year of the LORD,*” is interpreted in the scroll as “*the Year of Grace for Melchizedek.*” In this Year of Release (Jubilee), the “captives” will be assigned “*to the inheritance of Melchizedek.*” This begs the question, what “inheritance” was promised to Melchizedek? From a Jewish perspective, there are only two possible answers to this question: (a) the inheritance promised to the Son of God in Psalm 2, or (b) the permanent land inheritance promised to Abraham. Melchizedek is the one who met Abraham as God’s priest, He blessed Abraham, and He received the tithe from Abraham. Thus, the role of Melchizedek as officiating in a priestly role between God and Abraham, thus confirming the Abrahamic Covenant, is assured. Since the Abrahamic Covenant promises to Abraham the Land as a permanent inheritance, that Land inheritance is officiated through Melchizedek. It is reasonable to suppose that the Jewish sect that used this scroll combined these two ideas, from the Abrahamic land promise and the promise to God’s Son in Psalm 2. In doing so, the “inheritance of Melchizedek” is the inheritance of the Son of God which is to be shared with Abraham and his “seed.”

The scroll continues, “*for He will cast] their [lot] amid the po[r]tions of Melchize]dek, who will return them there...*” The “lot” is the division of the Land in the Kingdom promised to the tribes of Israel in Ezekiel 48. This is itself the fulfillment of the permanent land inheritance of the Abrahamic Covenant first promised to the Son of God in Psalm 2. Note that this division of the land among the twelve tribes (captives) is called the dividing of the “*portions of Melchizedek,*” that is, His own inheritance. Furthermore, it is Melchizedek who will “*proclaim to them liberty [Jubilee], forgiving them [the wrong-doings] of all their iniquities.*” The Gospels make it clear that in the mind of the Jews, God alone can forgive sins,⁶ certainly not a mere created angel. The only exception was God’s personal Agent, the Messenger of YHVH⁷ who was His Son. Several Hebrew scriptures indicate that it is God who will forgive and cleanse the tribes of Israel at the arrival of the Kingdom.⁸ Such things could never be said of a created angel.

However, the most important point from this first section is the fact that the Abrahamic land inheritance, to be divided among “Abraham’s seed” as a permanent possession, is said to be the inheritance of Melchizedek, that He will divide His own inheritance to the twelve tribes of Israel in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Apparently, the sect that this scroll represents believed that Melchizedek affirmed the Abrahamic Covenant when He met Abraham and that Melchizedek is the Son of God in Psalm 2:7. The valid inference

⁶ Luke 5:20-21

⁷ Exod. 23:20-23

⁸ Jer. 31:34; Joel 3:20-21; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 11:26-27

is that Melchizedek was the one who covenanted with Abraham and was the Messenger of YHVH who again confirmed the Covenant when Abraham obeyed His voice by attempting to sacrifice his only-begotten son, Isaac.⁹ Thus, Melchizedek is inextricably linked to the Abrahamic Covenant. He was not merely a footnote in Moses’ telling the story of Abraham and the Covenant to both him and his “seed.”

Section 2

As it is written concerning him [[Melchizedek]] in the Songs of David, who said,

ELOHIM has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement (Psalms lxxxii, 1).

And it was concerning him [[Melchizedek]] that he [[David]] said,

(Let the assembly of the peoples) return to the height above them; EL (god) will judge the peoples (Psalms vii, 7-8).

As for that which he s[aid,

How long will you] judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah (Psalms lxxxii, 2),

its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot [who] rebelled by turning away from the precepts of God to ... And Melchizedek will avenge the vengeance of the judgements of God... and he will drag [them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the sp[irits of] his [lot]. And all the 'gods [of Justice'] will come to his aid [to] attend to the de[struction] of Belial.

In this section, Melchizedek is identified as the one referred to as “God” (Elohim) in Psalm 82 and Psalm 7:6-8.

Psalm 82:1 <A Psalm of Asaph.>

*1 **God** stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.*

2 How long will you judge unjustly, And show partiality to the wicked? Selah

3 Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy.

4 Deliver the poor and needy; Free them from the hand of the wicked.

⁹ Gen. 22:11-12,15-18

“Melchizedek” is the Son of God

5 *They do not know, nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are unstable.*

6 *I said, “You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High.*

7 *But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes.”*

8 *Arise, O **God**, judge the earth; For **You shall inherit all nations.***

The Melchizedek scroll identifies “God” (Elohim) in vs. 1 as Melchizedek. The “gods” in whose midst He stands, judging them, were interpreted as “Belial” (Satan) and the wicked angels who followed him in rebellion. Modern Dead Sea Scroll scholarship uses this passage to show that both Melchizedek along with Belial and his wicked angels are spoken of using the same term (Elohim), and thus they conclude that Melchizedek is just one of many angels. The problem with that interpretation is that Melchizedek is said to be the judge and executioner of Belial and his wicked angels (gods), which makes Melchizedek far superior to them. Notice also the last verse in this Psalm, “*Arise O **God**, judge the earth; for **you will inherit all nations.***” This is the same “God” (Elohim) of verse 1 which the scroll identifies as Melchizedek. The clause, “*you shall inherit all nations*” is from Psalm 2, which speaks of the inheritance of the Son of God.¹⁰ Thus by identifying Melchizedek as “God” in Psalm 82, the scroll implicitly identifies Melchizedek as the Son of God in Psalm 2 who will “inherit all nations.”

Furthermore, the scroll identifies Melchizedek as the one called “God” (Elohim) whom David invoked to come to his own personal aid.

Psalm 7:1-8 LXX

1 *A Psalm of David, which he sang to the Lord because of the words of Chusi the Benjamite. **O Lord my God**, in thee have I trusted: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me. 2 Lest at any time the enemy seize my soul as a lion, while there is none to ransom, nor to save. 3 **O Lord my God**, if I have done this; (if there is unrighteousness in my hands;) 4 if I have requited with evil those who requited me with good; may I then perish empty by means of my enemies. 5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; and let him trample my life on the ground, and lay my glory in the dust. Pause. 6 Arise, **O Lord**, in thy wrath; be exalted in the utmost boundaries of mine enemies: awake, **O Lord my God**, according to the decree which thou didst command. 7 *And the congregation of the nations shall compass thee: and for this cause do thou return on high. 8 The Lord shall judge the nations:¹¹ judge me, **O Lord**, according to my righteousness, and according to my innocence that is in me.**

¹⁰ Psalm 2:6-9

¹¹ The portion highlighted in blue is quoted in the scroll and applied to Melchizedek.

This second portion of the scroll claims that Melchizedek is the “*Lord my God*” who will judge the nations. The writer of the scroll, quoting the Psalm, referred to Melchizedek as “*the Lord my God.*” Thus, the writer of this scroll understood that Melchizedek was David’s “*Lord*” and “*God.*”

This is extremely relevant to two other Psalms which are related but not actually quoted in the surviving portion of this scroll. They are the following:

In Psalm 110 David states, “*The LORD said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool*” and then he reported the oath that YHVH swore to David’s “*Lord,*” “*You are Priest unto the age according to the Melchizedek arrangement.*” Note that the priesthood of David’s “*Lord*” is the “*Melchizedek arrangement,*” pointing back to the encounter with Abraham in which Melchizedek acted as priest to Abraham in confirming the covenant by blessing him, bringing out the bread and wine, and then receiving the tithe from Abraham as an act of his worship of God through Melchizedek’s priesthood.

Then in Psalm 45, the promised seed of David according to the Davidic Covenant is called “*God,*” the one who will reign in the Kingdom upon David’s throne. This “*God*” has been given this role by his own “*God*” who is above Him. The entire Psalm is about the Messiah.

Psalm 45: 6-7 LXX

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. 7 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness beyond thy fellows.

These two Psalms have the Davidic Covenant in view, and mention David’s “*Lord*” as the Messiah, as well as calling the Messiah “*God.*” Such passages heavily influenced the Melchizedek theology contained in this scroll, especially given that Psalm 110 is the only other place in the entire Hebrew Bible where Melchizedek is mentioned by name.

Finally, the writer reverted back to Psalm 82:2 with Melchizedek saying to the gods, “*How long will you] judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?*” The writer interpreted these “*gods*” as the false gods who are demons: “*[I]ts interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot [who] rebelled by turning away from the precepts of God.*” He then attributed the judgment and execution of these “*gods*” in the remainder of the Psalm to Melchizedek. “*And Melchizedek will avenge the vengeance of the judgements of God... and he will drag [them [[the captives]] from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the sp[irits of] his [lot]. And all the ‘gods [of Justice’] [[that is the righteous angels]] will come to his aid [to] attend to the de[struction] of Belial.*”

In this section we see that Melchizedek is called “God” (Elohim), the judge and executioner of Satan and all of his angels. Since David called “God” to his own personal aid in Psalm 7 which the writer claimed was Melchizedek, the writer apparently believed that Melchizedek was in personal communication with David, and was David’s “Lord” in Psalm 110:1, and also the priest according to the Melchizedek arrangement in vs. 4.

Section 3

“And the height is ... all the sons of God... this ... This is the day of [Peace/Salvation] concerning which [God] spoke [through Isaiah the prophet, who said,

‘[How] beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion: Your ELOHIM [reigns]’ (Isa. lii, 7).

Its interpretation; the mountains are the prophets... and the messenger is the Anointed one of the spirit, concerning whom Dan[iel] said,

[Until an anointed one, a prince (Dan. ix, 25)] ...

... [And he who brings] good [news], who proclaims [salvation]: it is concerning him that it is written...

[To comfort all who mourn, to grant to those who mourn in Zion] (Isa. lxi, 2-3).

To comfort [those who mourn: its interpretation], to make them understand all the ages of t[ime] ... In truth ... will turn away from Belial... by the judgement[s] of God, as it is written concerning him,

[who says to Zion]; your ELOHIM reigns. [Isa. 52:7]

Zion is ..., those who uphold the Covenant, who turn from walking [in] the way of the people. And your ELOHIM is [Melchizedek, who will save them from] the hand of Belial.

As for that which He said,

Then you shall send abroad the trump[et in] all the land (Lev. xxv, 9) ..

In this section, the writer returns to the book of Isaiah, first quoting from Isaiah 52:7 regarding the feet of the one bringing the Good News, who the writer then claims is the “Anointed one” (Messiah) of Daniel 9.

Dan. 9:25-26

*25 “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until **Messiah the Prince**, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.*

*26 “And after the sixty-two weeks **Messiah shall be cut off**, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

It is difficult to discern from the scroll whether Melchizedek is the messenger mentioned by Isaiah proclaiming the Good News, or whether this messenger is the forerunner of Melchizedek. The latter seems to be the most likely explanation so that his forerunner is the one who says “Your God [Melchizedek] reigns.”

If so, the scroll portrays two Messiahs. The one is Melchizedek who met with Abraham, and with whom David communed, who was the one seated on the right hand of God in heaven, who will divide His inheritance and fulfill the ultimate Jubilee. The other was an Anointed one (Messiah) who was human, who would be the forerunner of Melchizedek and His coming Kingdom, announcing the Good News of the Kingdom as a man “with beautiful feet.”

The importance of the Melchizedek Scroll cannot be understated, or its importance to our understanding of the expectations of various Jewish sects just prior to the New Testament. By taking a great deal of prophecy that the New Testament portrays as spoken of the Messiah and His Kingdom and applying this to Melchizedek, the belief in the preexistence of the Messiah as Melchizedek (at least as one of two Messiahs) is assured by at least a portion of the Jewish population. But the Jewish theology portrayed in this scroll sets the tone for Paul’s treatment of Melchizedek in Hebrews where he seems to have had knowledge of this particular Jewish belief concerning Melchizedek, and assumed that many of his intended audience also had knowledge of it. Paul built on its basic presuppositions and what it had correct about Melchizedek, and corrected its apparent error of two distinct Messiahs, one divine and the other human. In Paul’s interpretation in Hebrews, all of this refers to the same Person, the Son of God, who while formerly being the divine Son, had to be in all points made like unto us in order to complete His role as the sacrifice. He then re-assume His role as “Priest of God Most High” when He ascended and sat down at the right hand of God. Paul shows that they are one in the same person.

The translation of Hebrews below is from the Last Generation Version, complete with footnotes.¹²

HEBREWS

Chapter 4

The Son as High Priest at the Father's Right Side

12 For Logos¹³ of God¹⁴ is alive and active, sharper beyond any double-edged knife,¹⁵ penetrating until¹⁶ the distribution¹⁷ of both life and breath, of both joints and sinews,¹⁸ and is the Judge of inner sentiments and thoughts of the heart.¹⁹ 13 And nothing created is imperceptible in His sight, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes²⁰ of Him, the one unto whom we report. 14 Having then a great High Priest who has passed through the skies – Jesus the Son of God²¹ – we should cling to the Profession.²² 15 For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way that

¹² http://www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV/LGV_Hebrews.pdf

¹³ John 1:1,14; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 2:14; Rev. 20:4

¹⁴ “Logos of God” (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) is a name for Jesus, as proven by Rev. 19:13. He is portrayed here as having eyes and conscious perception, being “the one to whom we report,” who is keenly observing the assemblies (Rev. 2:2,9,13,19; Rev. 3:2,8,15; Rev. 5:6).

¹⁵ μάχαιραν δίστομον, A large two-edged knife used for skinning, dissecting, or processing animals for food. Such knives would expose every interior part of the dissected animal. This was in contrast to ῥομφαία, a much longer sword used by soldiers or guards.

¹⁶ The Greek word ἄχρι is wrongly translated “to” or “unto” in most versions, with reference to distance or extent. However, without exception, ἄχρι always refers to duration of time in the New Testament, never to distance or extent. It should always be translated “until” (cf. Heb. 3:13 & 6:11).

¹⁷ The Greek word μερισμοῦ is wrongly translated “dividing asunder” (KJV) or “dividing/division” (NKJV, NASB, NIV). In Scripture, it always means “distribution” (deliver to each one his portion). The only other time it appears in the N.T. is Heb. 2:4 where it refers to the distribution of spiritual gifts. In the Septuagint it always refers to the distribution of the Land inheritance to the various tribes of Israel.

¹⁸ Here Paul used a very colorful description of the resurrection. The entire clause, “the distribution of both life and breath, of both joint and sinews,” is a direct reference to the resurrection so vividly described in the Valley of Dry Bones prophecy in Ezekiel 37:1-14.

¹⁹ Jesus is clearly identified in Rev. 2:23 by the same language: “all the assemblies will know that I am the one searching the minds and hearts.”

²⁰ The Lamb seated at the Father’s side has “seven eyes,” which represents “the seven Breaths of God” (Rev. 5:6 & Rev. 1:4). These “seven breaths” are also portrayed as “the seven lamps” before the throne of God (Rev. 4:5), one for each of the “seven lampstands” which were the seven assemblies in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:20). Revelation reveals that “the Breath” of God is the direct link between Christ (the head) and the Body (the local assembly). Jesus said that “where two or three are gathered together in My Name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

²¹ Paul linked together the “High Priest” and “Kingly” roles of the ‘Son’ in Psalm 2 & Psalm 110.

²² “The Profession” refers to the “rock” on which Christianity is founded, that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed King to sit upon David’s throne), the Son of God. (cf. Psalm 2 LXX & Matt. 16:13-18)

we are, [yet] without sin. 16 Therefore, we may come with boldness to the throne of grace,²³ so that we may receive mercy and grace for prompt assistance.

Chapter 5

Qualifications of a High Priest

For every high priest being taken from among men is appointed over men [in] the things of God, so that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, 2 being able to be compassionate to the ignorant and straying ones, since he also is enclosed with frailty. 3 This is why he is obliged to offer [sacrifices] for sins accordingly for the people, and for himself. 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but [only] the one being called by God, just as Aaron [was].

The Son is Qualified to be High Priest

5 Thus the Anointed one also did not glorify Himself to become High Priest. Instead, the one having said to Him: “*You are My Son, this day I have begotten You,*”²⁴ 6 also accordingly in another [Psalm] says: “*You are priest for the age*²⁵ *according to the Melchizedek arrangement.*”²⁶ 7 Who in the days of His flesh,²⁷ offering both requests and pleadings to the one able to save Him from death with strong outcries and tears, was heard out of fear. 8 And even being the Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered.²⁸ 9 And having become perfected, He became the source of perpetual deliverance to all those who are obeying Him, 10 having been called by God, ‘Chief Priest’ “*according to the Melchizedek arrangement.*”²⁹ ...

²³ Where Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand awaiting His inheritance (Psalm 110:1 & Rev. 3:21).

²⁴ Psalm 2:7

²⁵ “εις τον αιωνα” This can be rendered, “for the age,” “during the age,” or “unto the age.” It means throughout this present age (until the next). Paul quoted Psalm 110:4 from the LXX here and in Heb. 7:17 & 21, which uses the singular “for the age” (not forever as in most English translations). Each time Paul referred to the duration of the priesthood of Christ in Hebrews he repeated the same clause, “for the age,” (Heb. 6:20; 7:24; 7:28). However, when speaking of Christ’s role as King, Paul quoted the LXX in Heb. 1:8, “for the age of the age,” referring to the Millennial Sabbath Rest.

²⁶ Psalm 110:4

²⁷ “*In the days of His flesh*” implies a time when He was not in the flesh. The concept that the Son of God “*became flesh*” at a point in time was introduced in Heb. 2:9-18, “*having been ‘made a little bit lower than the messengers’ for the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might partake of death for every man. ... Then since the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He likewise partook of the same ... For this cause He was obliged to become like His brothers in every way.*” His preexistence is expounded further in chapter 7 as Paul shows that Melchizedek was in fact the Son of God.

²⁸ The suffering referred to here was Jesus’ anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44).

²⁹ Psalm 110:4

Chapter 6

The Anchor of Our Soul is the Abrahamic Promise

13 For God, in promising Abraham,³⁰ since He had no one greater to swear by, swore by Himself³¹ 14 saying, “Surely, in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.”³² 15 And thus, through endurance,³³ he obtained the promise. 16 For indeed, men swear by something greater, and an oath for confirmation settles all disputes for them. 17 In this way God, being intent on showing to the inheritors of the promise³⁴ the irrevocability of His purpose, confirmed with an oath,³⁵ 18 so that by two irrevocable actions,³⁶ which God is unable to falsify, we – the fleeing ones³⁷ – might have powerful incentive to cling to the hope laying before us,³⁸ 19 which we have as an anchor of the life, both secure and confirmed,³⁹

³⁰ Gen. 22:15-18 is an oath confirming the earlier promises in Gen. 13:14-17 & Gen. 17:4-8. These promises include the permanent inheritance of the land, from the Nile to the Euphrates rivers, as an everlasting possession for Abraham and his “Seed.” In Gal. 3:16, Paul explained that the term “Seed” in all these promises is singular, and refers to Christ. (Unfortunately, many English translations have “descendants” {plural} in these passages in Genesis. But, they are always singular in both the Hebrew and the LXX). Then in Gal. 3:26-29, Paul wrote that all who are baptized into Christ are the children of Abraham and heirs of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Here in Hebrews 6:13-20, Paul held up the hope of the permanent Land possession as our “anchor of the life,” the thing that will assure our perseverance if we always keep this hope before us (see also: Heb. 11:10,13,39-40). Consequently, all theological systems which deny the future Land promise to Christians remove the “anchor of the life” as the incentive to press on to the inheritance. Instead, they substitute the Gnostic hope – ascending to the “seven heavens.”

³¹ Gen. 22:16

³² Gen. 22:17-18

³³ The faith of Abraham was more than just mental assent. As explained in chapter 11, Abraham’s “faith” was completed by his action (leaving his homeland & offering His son), and perseverance in hard times (living in the Promised Land in a tent as an alien, awaiting the fulfillment of the land promise).

³⁴ Christians are the inheritors of the promise to Abraham (see note on verse 13).

³⁵ The oath also included the permanent land inheritance (cf. Gen. 22:16-17; Gen. 26:3-5; Gen. 50:24; Psalm 105:8-11; Luke 1:68-75)

³⁶ The two irrevocable actions were the original promise confirmed by God’s igniting Abraham’s sacrifice (Gen. 15:7-21) and the oath God swore to Him when He offered his son, Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19).

³⁷ This is a direct reference to Jesus’ instructions for His followers to flee from both the destruction of Jerusalem (AD70) and the Great Tribulation events, (Matt. 24:15-28; Luke 17:22-37; Luke 21:7-36; Rev. 12:3,13-17).

³⁸ The oath God swore to Abraham, confirming His promise to give him a multitude of descendants and the permanent inheritance of the Land, was given for the benefit of “the fleeing ones.” The hope of the Land inheritance is our destiny as co-heirs with the Son. This is also the “remaining promise” implied in Psalm 95, (quoted in Heb. 4:1), which is the “Rest” of the “seventh day” (Heb. 4:4) and the “Sabbatical” (Heb. 4:8). David also spoke extensively of this hope in Psalm 37, and Jesus quoted it in Matt. 5:5. See Appendix B for the opinion of the early Christians.

³⁹ This hope was confirmed by the power of the holy Breath in the Apostolic ministry (Heb. 2:2-4).

entering into the chamber behind the veil,⁴⁰ 20 where Jesus the prototype⁴¹ over us has entered, having become High Priest for the age according to the Melchizedek arrangement.

Chapter 7

A Closer Look at Melchizedek

For this ‘Melchizedek,’ king of Salem,⁴² priest of God the Highest, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth of everything,⁴³ is indeed primarily translated “King of Justice.”⁴⁴ After that [he is called] “King of Salem,”⁴⁵ which means ‘King of Peace.’ 3 [He is] without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, yet **having been portrayed as the Son of God,**⁴⁶ **He remains a priest**⁴⁷ **unto the materialization.**⁴⁸ 4 Now you see the magnificence of this one, to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the booty. 5 And indeed, those of the sons of Levi who obtain the sacred office have instructions to receive tenths from the people according to the Law, from their own

⁴⁰ The Holy of Holies in heaven, explained further in Heb. 9

⁴¹ This Greek word, προδρομος, appears only here in the NT. It appears twice in the LXX (Num. 13:20 & Isa. 28:4). In both it refers to early-sprouting fruit.

⁴² Salem means “peace.” “City of peace” is “Jeru-salem.” Melchizedek was called King of Jerusalem before the city even existed. Both titles are prophetic and Messianic.

⁴³ Genesis 14:18-20

⁴⁴ A title of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-5)

⁴⁵ Josephus writes that Melchizedek was king of “Salem,” the city which was later changed to “Jerusalem” (Jos. Antiq. Bk. I, ch. x, ii).

⁴⁶ Moses portrayed Melchizedek as the Son of God in Genesis 14:18-20.

⁴⁷ Melchizedek remains a priest. Note the present tense.

⁴⁸ “εις το διηνεκες” literally means “unto the carry through.” The word “διηνεκες” (carry-through) only appears 4 times in the New Testament, all occurring in Hebrews (Heb. 7:3, 10:1, 10:10; 10:14), always in the clause, “εις το διηνεκες” (unto the carry through), and always in the context of explaining Psalm 110 (which includes the promise of the present Melchizedek priesthood as Christ’s temporary role until His coming Kingdom, when His enemies are placed under His feet. This clause (unto the materialization) always refers to the fulfillment of the Father’s promises to His Son in that Psalm, His enemies being placed beneath His feet, and His receiving the nations and the ends of the land as His inheritance (Psalm 110:2-3,5-7 & Psalm 2:6-9). This meaning is clearly defined in Heb. 10:12-13. Paul wrote that Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand, having received the Melchizedek Priesthood “unto the materialization (εις το διηνεκες), the remainder being received when His enemies should be placed under His feet.” It is clear therefore, that this term refers specifically to the beginning of the Sabbath Rest, when the promises to the Son of His inheritance are to be fulfilled. The “priesthood” of Melchizedek is said to extend to this point (7:3), and so is the priesthood of Christ said to continue “εις το διηνεκες” (10:12).

This essentially means that Christ and Melchizedek are the same person, and His priestly function ends when His reigning over His enemies begins. This is why Jewish believers are now being prepared for the role of priests for the nations in the coming age (Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 2:5), in fulfillment of Exodus 19:4-6.

brothers who also come from the groin of Abraham. 6 Yet, [it was] someone apart from their genealogy to whom Abraham [gave] the tenth, who [then] blessed the one having the promises. 7 It is indisputable that **the one who blesses is superior to the one who is blessed.** 8 And here⁴⁹ dying men receive tenths. **But there⁵⁰ [it] is confirmed that He [Melchizedek] is alive!**⁵¹ 9 And, Levi, who receives the tenths, has given the tenth through Abraham, 10 because he was still in the patriarch’s groin when Melchizedek met him! 11 If indeed, then, completion was through the Levitical priesthood, (for the people had been bound under law by it), why still the need for another priest to arise according to the Melchizedek arrangement, and not said to be according to the Aaron arrangement?

The Priesthood Superseded means the whole Law was Superseded

12 For the priesthood being superseded also requires that the Law be superseded. 13 For the one about whom these things are said was a member of a different tribe from which no one has attended the altar. 14 For it is obvious that our Master came forth from Judah, about which tribe Moses said nothing about the priesthood. 15 It is also abundantly obvious that if a different Priest stands up “according to the order of Melchizedek,” 16 who has not come according to the Law of a fleshly precept,⁵² but according to power of a durable life,⁵³ 17 (for he attests, “You are a priest unto the age according to the Melchizedek arrangement”), 18 there is therefore indeed a cancellation of the previous ordinance because of its weakness and unprofitability. 19 For the Law brings no one to completion. But the introduction of a better hope does, through which we are approaching God.

The Superiority of the Melchizedek Priesthood

20 And indeed it was not apart from swearing an oath. 21 For indeed the priests have become [so] apart from the swearing of an oath. Yet this one [has become Priest] through the swearing of the oath to Him, “The Master swore an oath, and will not reverse it, ‘You are Priest unto the age, according to the order of Melchizedek’.” 22

⁴⁹ The Law instructed the Levites to receive the tenth from their brothers (Deut. 14:22-29), and this was continuing at the Temple when Paul wrote Hebrews.

⁵⁰ In Genesis 14:18-20

⁵¹ Melchizedek was still alive when Paul wrote Hebrews. Melchizedek was a preincarnate appearance of Christ Himself, still being alive to this day. We are assured then, that Abraham met Christ face to face and paid Him the tenth. Christ, the King of Salem (Jerusalem), Priest of God the Highest, actually had the “communion” meal with Abraham (Gen. 14:18). Tithing directly to Christ therefore has precedent in Scripture, and establishes a pattern for all who are “Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29), who “walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12).

⁵² A precept of the Law for men of flesh who die and must continually be replaced by successors.

⁵³ From Psalm 110:4, Paul inferred that the Melchizedek Priest needed no successors based on the clause, “unto the age” (for the whole age until the age to come).

Accordingly, Jesus has become the guarantor of a much better covenant. 23 And there are many who have become priests, because death prevents them from continuing. 24 Yet this one, because He is to continue “*unto the age*,” has an untransferable priesthood. 25 From which [priestly office] He is able to complete the deliverance of those approaching God through Him, continually living to intercede over them. 26 For this kind of High Priest has been appropriate for us, blameless, innocent, pure, having been separate from sinners, having become superior to the heavenly beings.⁵⁴ 27 He has no daily necessity, (like the chief priests who first offer sacrifices for their own sin, and only afterward for the people). But He did this in totality, offering up Himself. 28 For the Law appoints as high priests men with imperfections. Yet, after the Law, the word of the sworn oath [appoints] the Son “*unto the age*,” having been perfected.⁵⁵ ...

There is no question that upon His ascension Jesus was the “*Priest according to the Melchizedek arrangement*.” Paul claimed that the Son of God in Psalm 2 & 110 functioned in the role of Melchizedek after His ascension. He also claimed that Moses himself portrayed Melchizedek as “the Son of God,” and that Melchizedek “is alive” (present tense). These two points are proven in Hebrews 7 vs. 3 and 8.

Hebrews 7:3

*3 [He is] without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, yet having been portrayed as the Son of God, **He remains a priest unto the materialization.***

Paul pointed out that **Moses’ portrayal of Melchizedek** in Genesis 14 was “*without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,...*” Moses was not explicitly claiming that Melchizedek had no human genealogy, but rather Moses **portrayed him** without any genealogy. Paul continues, “*yet having been portrayed as the Son of God, He remains a priest unto the materialization.*” The clause, “having been portrayed,” still refers to how Moses portrayed Melchizedek in Genesis 14 (as the Son of God) just as the previous words speak of Moses’ portrayal of Melchizedek without human genealogy. Moses portrayed Melchizedek as the Son of God by two Messianic titles: His name means “King of Righteousness,” language Isaiah used for the Messiah;⁵⁶ and “King of Salem” which is Jerusalem.⁵⁷ Moses called him “Priest of God Most High,”

⁵⁴ Becoming superior to the celestial messengers (Heb. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:5-10)

⁵⁵ Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9

⁵⁶ Isa. 11:4-5; Isa. 32:1,16

⁵⁷ Psalm 76:2

which indicates a mediatorial role between God and man,⁵⁸ the role played by the Messenger of YHVH.⁵⁹ Moses wrote that Melchizedek communed with Abraham using bread and wine, the very elements of the New Covenant. Then Melchizedek “blessed” Abraham, which is a sign of the confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant.⁶⁰ Finally, Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, which shows that Abraham considered Melchizedek as God’s Agent, tithing to God through Melchizedek. In all of these ways, Moses “portrayed [Melchizedek] as [or like] the Son of God,” not that Melchizedek was “*made* (created) *like* the Son of God” as in most translations, and thus could not be the Son of God given that one thing being LIKE another thing cannot be the same thing. What was being “likened” by Paul was Moses portrayal of Melchizedek compared to how the Son of God is portrayed in both the Old and New Testaments, in every aspect of this encounter that Moses mentioned.

Yet the most important point in verse 3 is the last statement, “*He remains a priest unto the materialization.*” The Greek clause is:

μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές
He remains priest unto the materialization

The verb μένει is indicative mood, present tense, active voice, third person, singular. The English pronoun “He” comes from the third person and singular number of this verb. It refers back to Melchizedek in vs. 1 who is the subject of the entire sentence which includes all of verses 1-3. “*This Melchizedek*” is the subject of all of the verbs and participles, all of the subordinate clauses in verses 1-3. Thus the subject of the verb μένει can only be Melchizedek. It cannot be “the Son of God” because that clause, being in the dative case, is the object of the participle ἀφωμοιωμένος (portrayed like unto). **The subject of the verb μένει must be in the nominative case.** So it is Melchizedek who still “remains priest” according to Paul. Furthermore, he used the present tense which with indicative mood verbs indicates that the action (or state) of the verb is both continuous and present from the perspective of the writer. Thus, Melchizedek was still the “priest” when Paul wrote Hebrews.

Secondly, the clause “unto the materialization” is from the Greek εἰς τὸ διηνεκές. Most translations incorrectly render this as either “continually” or “forever.” Neither accurately reflects the entire meaning. The preposition εἰς literally means “into” or “unto,” that is, forward progress until a point reached. Thus the preposition itself implies

⁵⁸ 1 Tim. 2:5

⁵⁹ Gen. 22:10-18; Exod. 3:2ff; Exod. 20:20-23

⁶⁰ Gen. 28:4; Gal. 3:14

a temporary continual forward motion (in this case in time), but also requires an object which supplies the termination of the forward progress. Here, that termination point is defined by the object of the preposition εἰς, which is τὸ διηνεκέες (lit., the completion, or the materialization). Now what is extremely critical about this word is that the only time it appears in the entire Bible (including the LXX) is in Hebrews. In every case it is found in the same prepositional phrase εἰς τὸ διηνεκέες, and in every case the context points to the fulfillment of God’s promise to His Son when Christ’s enemies will become His footstool.⁶¹ Consequently, Hebrews 7:3 states that Melchizedek remains Priest until the fulfillment of God’s promise to His Son in Psalm 110:1. This is proof that the “Melchizedek priesthood” promised to the one seated at God’s right hand⁶² continues perpetually with Melchizedek himself as that priest. In other words, the Son of God was Melchizedek who was Priest of God Most High in Abraham’s day and is the same person seated at the Father’s right hand now having reassumed His former role before the incarnation, after having been “perfected” as Man. Apparently, Melchizedek, the Son of God, acted as Priest of the Most High God also to Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah. But when the Son of God “emptied Himself” in order to become fully human, He could not serve in that priestly role until He was “perfected” as Man.⁶³ Once He was “perfected” as Man, He immediately resumed His former role of being Priest of God Most High “according to the Melchizedek arrangement.”⁶⁴

Hebrews 7:8

8 And here dying men receive tenths. But there [it] is confirmed that He [Melchizedek] is alive!

When Paul wrote, “here dying men receive tenths,” he was referring to the fact that the Levitical priests at the Temple were still receiving the tithes of the people according to the Law of Moses. When he wrote, “but there,” he was referring to Genesis 14 where Abraham payed tithes to Melchizedek. The implied subject in the context is Melchizedek of Genesis 14, not the Man Jesus, because Paul was contrasting the tithing to Melchizedek vs. tithing to the Levitical priests. Thus, the clause μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῆ (lit. “being confirmed that He is alive”) means that Melchizedek was alive when Paul wrote Hebrews, since he used the verb ζῆ (He is alive) which is indicative mood, present tense, active voice, 3rd person, singular. That is, **Melchizedek is alive.**

⁶¹ See: Heb. 10:1,12,14 LGV & footnotes

⁶² Psalm 110:4

⁶³ Heb. 5:8-10; Heb. 7:28

⁶⁴ Heb

Paul corrected what appears to be the major error of the Jewish interpretation found in the Melchizedek scroll. Their error was that there would be two Messiahs. The first one would be the forerunner of Messiah Melchizedek, who would be an “Anointed one” who announces the Good News of the coming Kingdom of Melchizedek (according to Isaiah 52:7) and is also the “Anointed one” (Messiah) who was to be “cut off” according to Daniel 9:26 prior to the arrival of Melchizedek’s Kingdom. The second Messiah was Melchizedek who appeared to Abraham, who is seated at the right hand of God continuing His priestly activities until His Kingdom arrives. Paul combined both themes of the Melchizedek Scroll, identifying Jesus as Melchizedek, the one who confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant with Abraham in person. Consequently, the Melchizedek scroll displays a pre-Christian interpretation which necessarily requires the preexistence of the Son of God whom Christians know to be Jesus the Anointed one. There is only one Messiah who is both Melchizedek the Son of God and Jesus the Son of Man.

Those of us who recognize that the hope of Christianity is centered squarely upon the Covenant made with Abraham cannot discard Melchizedek as merely a footnote to the Torah, especially since Jesus Himself claimed to be Melchizedek.

John 8:56

56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

The Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed by “Melchizedek” when He met Abraham, then again by His calling to Abraham from heaven as “the Messenger of YHVH” when Isaac was nearly sacrificed.⁶⁵

It is no wonder that when twice the Messenger of YHVH was asked His name He declined to give it. The first instance was Jacob’s wrestled with Him.

Gen. 32:29-30

29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

⁶⁵ Gen. 22:15-18

Melchizedek declined to reveal His name, but instead He blessed Jacob, just as He had blessed Abraham.

In the second instance, He again declined to give His name.

Judges 13:17-18

17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?"

18 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

His name is indeed wonderful; it is Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness, King of Salem, King of Peace. His title is the Messenger of YHVH, Logos, Wisdom, Son of God, our great High Priest seated at God’s right hand, Jesus the Messiah. Abraham knew this; David knew this; and even some of the Jews before Christ knew a great deal of this.

Justin Martyr:

"I have proved that it was Jesus who appeared to and conversed with Moses, and Abraham, and all the other patriarchs without exception, ministering to the will of the Father; who also, I say, came to be born man by the Virgin Mary, and lives forever. For the latter is He after whom and by whom the Father will renew both the heaven and the earth; this is He who shall shine an eternal light in Jerusalem; this is he who is the King of Salem after the order of Melchizedek, and the eternal Priest of the Most High."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, ch. 113