

## O.T. Shadows of Christ: Melchizedek

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I want to begin a few lessons concerning O.T. shadows of Christ.
2. To understand the value of this study we must remember that O.T. shadows, or types, are faint pictures or outlines of things that were to come in their fullest sense in Christ.
3. Because Jesus is God but also came in the form of a man (Phil. 2:7-8), some of the most detailed of these shadows are people, men whose lives are revealed for us in the O.T.
4. Our focus today is on such an individual who although **very little** is said about him, his record in biblical history provides a very powerful and significant shadow of the Christ, his nature, and work.
  - A. In fact, his appearance is so unique that it can be truthfully said that the reason he appears in the life of Abraham is that it was God's plan that he be a type, or shadow, of the Christ.
  - B. That individual is Melchizedek, spoken of in the O.T. only in a few verses found in Genesis 14 and later in Psalm 110.
5. I hope by considering what is said of Melchizedek and how he so intricately relates to the Christ that we can come to appreciate how amazing the working out of God's plan truly is.

### BODY:

#### **I. Why is this shadow/substance relationship of Melchizedek and Jesus so important?**

- A. It relates to how the Messiah was **prophesied** to be a **king** and a **priest** of God.
  1. The Messiah is said to be a **branch** of the stem of Jesse, David's father, who would **rule** and judge the world in righteousness and bring peace to all (**i.e., lion lie down with the lamb**) through the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:1-9ff.).
  2. The Messiah would **rule as king on David's throne forever** (Isa. 9:6-7 – "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and **the government will rest on His shoulders**; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Eternal Father, **Prince of Peace**.<sup>7</sup> There will be **no end to the increase** of His government or **of peace, on the throne of David** and over his **kingdom**, to **establish it** and to uphold it **with** justice and **righteousness** from **then on** and **forevermore**. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.").
  3. The Messiah, the one called "**Branch**," would also be a **priest** of God while ruling on His throne (Zech. 6:11-13 – "Take silver and gold, make an ornate crown and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, **the high priest**."<sup>12</sup> Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is **Branch**, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD."<sup>13</sup> Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and **rule on His throne**. Thus, He will be a **priest on His throne**, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."').
- B. This **king** and **priest** Messiah created a significant problem!
  1. To be a branch of the stem of Jesse and to rule on David's throne means that the Messiah had to be of the tribe of Judah, which Jesus was!
  2. Levi, not Judah, was the priestly tribe!
  3. So, how could there be a "**king and priest** Messiah"? Is there precedence for it? What would this mean for the Law and the priesthood? These were all valid questions a Jew would have that the shadow of Melchizedek would ultimately answer.

#### **II. The shadow/type: Melchizedek**

- A. Melchizedek appears on the scene after Abraham had defeated the alliance of kings under Chedorlaomer that had attacked Sodom and Gomorrah and taken Lot and his possessions (Genesis 14:17-20 – "Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).<sup>18</sup> And **Melchizedek king of Salem** brought out bread and wine; now he was a

**priest of God Most High.** <sup>19</sup> He blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup> and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” He gave him a tenth of all.”).

1. Who is Melchizedek?

- a. He was *king of righteousness*, which is what Melchizedek means, and *king of Salem, or king of peace*.
- b. He was the *priest of God Most High* long before the Levitical priesthood came into being.
- c. Abraham acknowledged Melchizedek’s exalted position as a priest of God by receiving Melchizedek’s blessing and giving him a 10<sup>th</sup> of the spoils!

2. Nothing else concerning who Melchizedek was revealed in the O.T.

- a. There is no mention of his nationality, family, life, or death.
- b. He comes in and out of biblical history with only this short, *seemingly incidental*, mention of him within this event of Abraham’s life.
- c. But, as we shall see, this was anything but incidental.

B. The other mention of him is David’s prophecy of the Messianic king and priest of God (Psa. 110:1-2, 4 – “The LORD says to my Lord: “**Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.**” <sup>2</sup> The LORD will stretch forth **Your strong scepter from Zion**, saying, “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”...<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “**You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**”).

1. The Messiah is **Lord** and would rule at God’s right hand (110:1).

- a. When David spoke these words, he was king over Israel, occupying the highest position in God’s earthly kingdom, and therefore, the highest position on earth.
- b. Yet the Messiah is **David’s Lord** who would rule **at the Father’s right hand** holding **God’s strong scepter** until all His enemies are conquered.

2. God gave an unchanging oath that the Messiah would be a **priest forever** according to the order of **Melchizedek** (110:4).

- a. This statement is revealed by the Spirit without further explanation, allowing the Holy Spirit to use it with great power in the N.T.
- b. For, it is the *lack of details* concerning Melchizedek’s life, lineage, and priesthood that make him such a powerful shadow of the Christ as is presented here.
- c. I know that sounds strange, but the Spirit’s use in the N.T. of how he lacked certain characteristics will bear this out.

### III. The substance/antitype: Jesus the Christ.

A. Like Melchizedek, Jesus the Messiah fulfills the role of **king** (Heb. 7:1-2 – “For this **Melchizedek, king of Salem**, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup> to whom also Abraham **gave a tenth part of all**, first being translated “**king of righteousness**,” and then also **king of Salem, meaning “king of peace”**).

1. Jesus’ kingship was promised to Mary (Luke 1:30-33 – “The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, **Mary**; for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him **Jesus**. <sup>32</sup> He will be **great** and will be called the **Son of the Most High**; and the Lord God will **give Him the throne of His father David**; <sup>33</sup> **and He will reign** over the house of Jacob **forever**, and **His kingdom will have no end.**”).
2. It was fulfilled in Christ’s resurrection as preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:32-36 – “This **Jesus God raised up again**, to which we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Therefore having been **exalted to the right hand of God**, and having received from the Father the **promise of the Holy Spirit**, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For it was not **David** who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘**The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,** <sup>35</sup> **until I**

**make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”**<sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that **God has made Him** both **Lord [king] and Christ**—this **Jesus** whom you crucified.”).

- a. Peter shows the resurrected Jesus to be the fulfillment of David words in **Psa. 110:1-4**.
- b. By this Peter affirms Jesus to be **Lord/king/ruler** and **priest according to the order of Melchizedek**.

B. Like Melchizedek, Jesus fulfills the role of **eternal High Priest** (Heb. 6:19-20; 7:3 – “This **hope** we have as an anchor of the soul, a **hope** both **sure** and **steadfast** and one which **enters within the veil**,<sup>20</sup> where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, **having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek**...<sup>7:3</sup> “Without father, without mother, without genealogy, **having neither beginning of days nor end of life**, but made **like the Son of God**, he **remains a priest perpetually**.”).

1. The record of Melchizedek **mentioned nothing of his birth or his death**, presenting a shadow of one who is **eternal** just “**like the Son of God**,” or Jesus! (Heb. 7:3).
2. Jesus was able to fulfill this shadow by being **God** and by the **resurrection** from the dead (Heb. 7:15-17 – “And it is yet far more evident if, **in the likeness of Melchizedek**, there arises another priest<sup>16</sup> who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but **according to the power of an endless life**.<sup>17</sup> For He testifies: “You are a **priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek**.”).

#### IV. What about the questions?

- A. Melchizedek answers the questions concerning Jesus being both **king** and **priest**.
- B. He provides the answer concerning Jesus the Messiah being of the tribe of Judah.
  1. For, Melchizedek, who was king, served as **priest** of God “**without father, without mother, without genealogy**” (Heb. 7:3).
  2. In other words, Melchizedek’s shadow presented a glimpse of one who would come that would be king and serve as high priest **without the credentials** required by the O.T. Law.
  3. So, because the Messiah was to rule on **David’s throne** and be a **priest** at the same time (as required by Psa. 110:1-4), like Melchizedek **he would not have the priestly credentials** of being a **Levite** required by the O.T.
- C. He answers how Christ’s priesthood could be greater than the Levitical priesthood given by Moses’s law (Heb. 7:4-10 – “**Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils**.<sup>5</sup> And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest’s office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.<sup>6</sup> **But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises**.<sup>7</sup> But without any dispute **the lesser is blessed by the greater**.<sup>8</sup> In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that **he lives on**.<sup>9</sup> And, so to speak, **through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes**,<sup>10</sup> for **he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him**.”).

  1. So, are you beginning to see the wonders of God’s plan being worked out here in just this small appearance of Melchizedek to Abraham in Genesis 14? You should be!
  2. From this appearance we see that Christ’s priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek is not inferior, but in fact is so superior that even Abraham, who had the promises and from whose loins the Levitical priesthood came, paid tithes to him!

- D. He answers whether the law of Moses could not stop Him from being a priest (Heb. 7:11-14 – “Now if perfection was through the **Levitical priesthood** (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for **another priest** to arise **according to the order of Melchizedek**, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?<sup>12</sup> For when the

**priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.** <sup>13</sup> For the one concerning whom these things are spoken **belongs to another tribe**, from which no one has officiated at the altar. <sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord was descended from **Judah**, a tribe with reference to which **Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.**”).

1. So, the **demand of prophecy** that the Messiah be a priest after the order of Melchizedek meant:
    - a. That the Levitical priesthood was not sufficient to fulfill God’s eternal purposes.
    - b. That the Law founded upon that priesthood had to be changed, that it could not stay in force!
  2. So, to argue that the Law prevented Jesus from being high priest is contrary to the Law itself.
- E. It answers the question of why Jesus offers us a greater, more steadfast, and sure hope.
1. Jesus does this because He can serve **forever** in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb. 7:15-25 – “And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup> who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of **an indestructible life.** <sup>17</sup> For it is attested of Him, “**YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.**” <sup>18</sup> For, on the one hand, there is a **setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness** <sup>19</sup> (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand **there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.** <sup>20</sup> And inasmuch as it was not without an oath <sup>21</sup> (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but **He with an oath** through the One who said to Him, “**THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, ‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER’**”); <sup>22</sup> so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. <sup>23</sup> The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers **because they were prevented by death from continuing,** <sup>24</sup> but Jesus, on the other hand, **because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.** <sup>25</sup> Therefore **He is able also to save forever** those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession for them.**”).
  2. So, that Jesus the Messiah had to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek meant:
    - a. Jesus had to have an endless life that he might serve as priest forever.
    - b. The end of the Law, the former commandments that were weak and useless because they ultimately made nothing perfect.
    - c. He brought us a better hope by which we draw near to God, seeing He serves as our high priest in the present of God forever.
  3. Therefore, we can live with confidence in the knowledge that our salvation is secure because He always lives to do His priestly work of intercession on our behalf.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. What an amazing thread God has woven throughout history to bring about our salvation through Jesus the Messiah, our eternal king and High Priest of God.
2. Yet, the benefits bestowed upon us by the Messiah are only offered to those who will submit to Jesus as their Lord and Savior and enter His body and kingdom through F-R-C-Bp.
  - A. If you are delaying your obedience, why would you delay your opportunity to have Jesus as your eternal King and Priest and the salvation He offers?
  - B. If you are a Christian but have not lived as one who serves such a great Savior, King, and Priest, will you come confessing your sin and repenting that God might forgive you and receive you back to Him?
3. Will you come to Jesus today?