

100 Bible Study Guides for Inquiring Minds

SDA Foundational Beliefs - Lesson 6: Who Was Melchizedek?



Art Institute of Chicago, Artist Giambattista Tiepolo, The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek, 1709 – 1725, 19 December 2024 for Unsplash

Love Defined

Love may best be defined as doing something for someone else that they cannot do for themselves, even if it comes at a great personal cost. When seen in the light of the Cross, what greater love could ever be expressed?

The Melchizedek Blessing, Genesis 14:18-20

*Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand!*

The Aaronic Blessing, Numbers 6:24-26

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.*

Introduction

Who was Melchizedek? The name Melchizedek literally means, “my King” or “King of righteousness.” Was He some obscure king whom God sent to teach Abram about tithing? Or as the scripture says, the Son of the most-high God, our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, before being born into this world (see Matthew 2:1-2). Let’s let the Holy Scriptures guide us.

On the surface, Melchizedek, was an Old Testament High Priest who received tithes from the people, including Abram. He is also an enigmatic, mysterious figure whose name first appears in Genesis 14. In fact, many people don’t know what to do with Melchizedek. He is first mentioned in Genesis, David alludes to him in the Psalms, and Paul expounds on him for 5 chapters in Hebrews.

As a prelude and a type of fractal representing the plan of salvation, the pre-incarnate Jesus, walked with Enoch on the earth - what an incredible friendship! We all need that friend who can walk us into heaven and that friend is Jesus Christ! The importance of Melchizedek’s identity is foundational for better understanding the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. We

may never know the plans laid for our salvation, but we can know that Jesus has been intimately involved with every aspect. In fact, Jesus has occupied all of the roles of the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, except His last role of taking us to heaven. As Melchizedek, He was both King of Peace and a High Priest on earth. He became the Sacrificial Lamb for us, fulfilling hundreds of Old Testament prophecies. The following are unique claims in regards to Melchizedek:

- Three books in the Bible mention or allude to Melchizedek: Genesis, Psalm and Hebrews.
- King of Righteousness and High Priest (He held two distinct offices simultaneously unlike any other person who has gone before or after). Melchizedek's name means, "King of Righteousness." Melchizedek was a priest of God the Most-High. Genesis 14:18-20.
- The order of Melchizedek is royal and everlasting. Psalm 110:4.
- Melchizedek was the King who ruled over the city of Salem (which is believed to be modern-day Jerusalem).
- Given the highest authority described in the Bible.
- Priest of the "God Most High."
- Offers bread and wine to Abram after Abram's victory in battle.
- Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek.
- David writing in Psalm 110, declares a future king will be greater and higher than any other king, prophesying about the future Christ, who is also a priest in the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). David declares the future Messiah will hold both of these offices simultaneously, making Melchizedek a forerunner of the Messiah.
- Paul, the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 7:3,4) equates Melchizedek, "having no father nor mother" and "resembling the Son of God, He continues a priest forever.
- The New Testament writings are in harmony with the Old Testament claims.
- Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and Aaron.
- Melchizedek gives blessings.
- Melchizedek has no recorded family, has no beginning and no end.
- If Melchizedek was pre-incarnate Christ, He operated in the role of earthly High Priest and King, playing a role in every aspect of the Earthly Israelite Sanctuary and most importantly, fulfilling the Atonement.

There are three major beliefs regarding Melchizedek's origin: **Option 1** comes from the rabbinic or Hebrew tradition which believes Melchizedek was Shem, the second son of Noah, who lived 502 years after the flood. Abraham was born 392 years after Shem and lived 175 years. Shem outlived Abraham by somewhere between 32 to 35 years (depending

on historical sources) overlapping his life by between 35 to 40 years (Shem died in 1811 B.C.; depending on differing original sources). Extra Biblical sources push this narrative. The Jews do not see the Melchizedek priesthood as the same priesthood of the Christian's Messiah. The extensive writing about Melchizedek in the New Testament book Hebrews, is thought to reflect there was intense speculation among the Jews at that time about the origins of Melchizedek. Because Shem has parents and a beginning and ending, many believe this disqualifies this position.

Option 2 is from historians who suggest Melchizedek was a Canaanite ruler who was a righteous King and founder of Salem but he was not the pre-incarnate Christ. Saying someone is like Christ is not saying they were Christ. This option does not see Melchizedek as necessarily a specific person but is theoretically explained by theologians who categorize Melchizedek as a "type" and Jesus Christ as the "anti-type." Another way to put it is that Melchizedek was an archetype of Jesus but not exactly Jesus. This categorization is a way to explain how God prefigures the future by using current time examples which point to a future person or event. This is largely the position of the Catholic church.

Option 3 comes from Christian traditions who believe Melchizedek was the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. This understanding is popular with much of Christianity which sees Melchizedek as an Old Testament Christophany (a real appearance or non-physical manifestation of Jesus), in other words, most Christian / Protestant religions believe Melchizedek was Jesus. Other options have been suggested for Melchizedek including the Holy Spirit, an unnamed angel, etc., but there is a lack of Biblical support for these positions.

Let's examine the facts using some scholarly tools used by theologians. These tools have fancy names but don't let their titles scare you. They are just different ways of studying and interpreting scripture. These tools are eisegesis, exegesis, and hermeneutics. It is not imperative you and I come to the same conclusion about Melchizedek but it is critical to study and consider the possibilities. In the process of examining the facts and applying these tools, we will arrive at an important destination. Regardless of our conclusion, we are going to learn more about the importance of understanding who was Melchizedek.

Let's define the tools we are going to use. Most of us use eisegesis in one form or another; it does not require formal theological training. **Eisegesis** (pronounced ice - a - Jesus) is the process of reading one's own ideas and biases into the text. Eisegesis imposes one's assumptions, beliefs or biases onto the text, regardless of its original context. Not surprisingly, one's eisegesis improves as they study the Bible and compare texts. This tool gives each person the benefit of allowing the Holy Spirit to impress the truth and is best

used in combination with exegesis and hermeneutics. **Exegesis** (pronounced x - a - Jesus) uses critical explanations, interpretations and draws out the meaning from a text, including studying the original languages of the Bible: Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek. Hermeneutics is another tool or method to study the Scriptures. **Hermeneutics** (pronounced her - muh - new - tiks) is the theory and methodology of interpreting Bible texts. Hermeneutics seeks to find the most accurate reading of a text or passage by placing the text or passage into the context of cultural practices at the time of the writing. It seeks to understand human actions in the most accurate and appropriate milieu of secular and pagan-focused societies, cultural, political, governmental influences, popular philosophy at the time, etc.

The final method of studying the Bible is letting the Bible interpret itself. We typically use the verses below to support this method:

- Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt **meditate therein day and night**, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
- Proverbs 2:1-5 My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee: so thou include thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou cry after knowledge and lift up thy voice for understanding; if thou **seek her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures**; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.
- Proverbs 3:5 **Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding.**
- Psalm 1:2 His delight is in the law of the Lord; **and in His law doth he meditate day and night.**
- Isaiah 28:9,10 Whom shall He teach knowledge and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. **For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little...**
- Isaiah 55:11 So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but **it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**
- Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for a **lack of knowledge**: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.
- Matthew 4:1-4 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was afterward an

hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, command these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, **man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.**

- John 1:1 In the beginning was the **Word** and the **Word** was with God and the **Word was God.**
- John 5:39 **Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.**
- Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so.
- 1 Timothy 4:13 **Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**
- 2 Timothy 2:15 **Study to shew thyself approved unto God**, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of Truth.**
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:** that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
- Hebrews 4:12 **For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit**, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- James 1:5 **If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.**
- 1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks of you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.**
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
- 1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
- Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Why is understanding who is Melchizedek considered to be a Foundational SDA Belief? Melchizedek is mentioned or alluded to, at least 11 times in the Bible: Genesis 14:18-20, Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews chapters 5-8. When we study about the Old Testament earthly Sanctuary, built by the Israelites to God's exact standards, we find that Christ has assumed

every role outlined for the Sanctuary. The primary priestly role of the high priest of the Sanctuary is mediating between God and Man. The person who assumed this role from before Creation, is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We are supposed to view our High Priest, King and Lamb of God, through the lens of the sanctuary. Psalm 77:13 states, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?" If we believe Melchizedek was anyone but the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, it negates the view of Jesus Christ's 6,000 years of ministry on this earth.

Melchizedek's role informs us of the New Covenant, a time when animal sacrifices are not necessary but the breaking of bread and drinking of new wine, gives us a clean slate. Melchizedek also blessed those who returned a faithful tithe. Jesus as our Creator, Jesus as the Priest who sacrificed the lamb in the Garden of Eden, Melchizedek as our High Priest and King, Jesus born of a woman, Jesus who lived a sinless life, Jesus who died for our sins and ended the animal sacrificial period, to Jesus in the Most Holy Place, who now intercedes for us at the right hand of God. Soon, it will be Jesus, Lamb of God who has redeemed His children and taken them to heaven. There will be no more sanctuary, no more symbology, but only Jesus and His Kingly and peaceful reign over all.

Section 1: Mentions of Melchizedek in the Bible

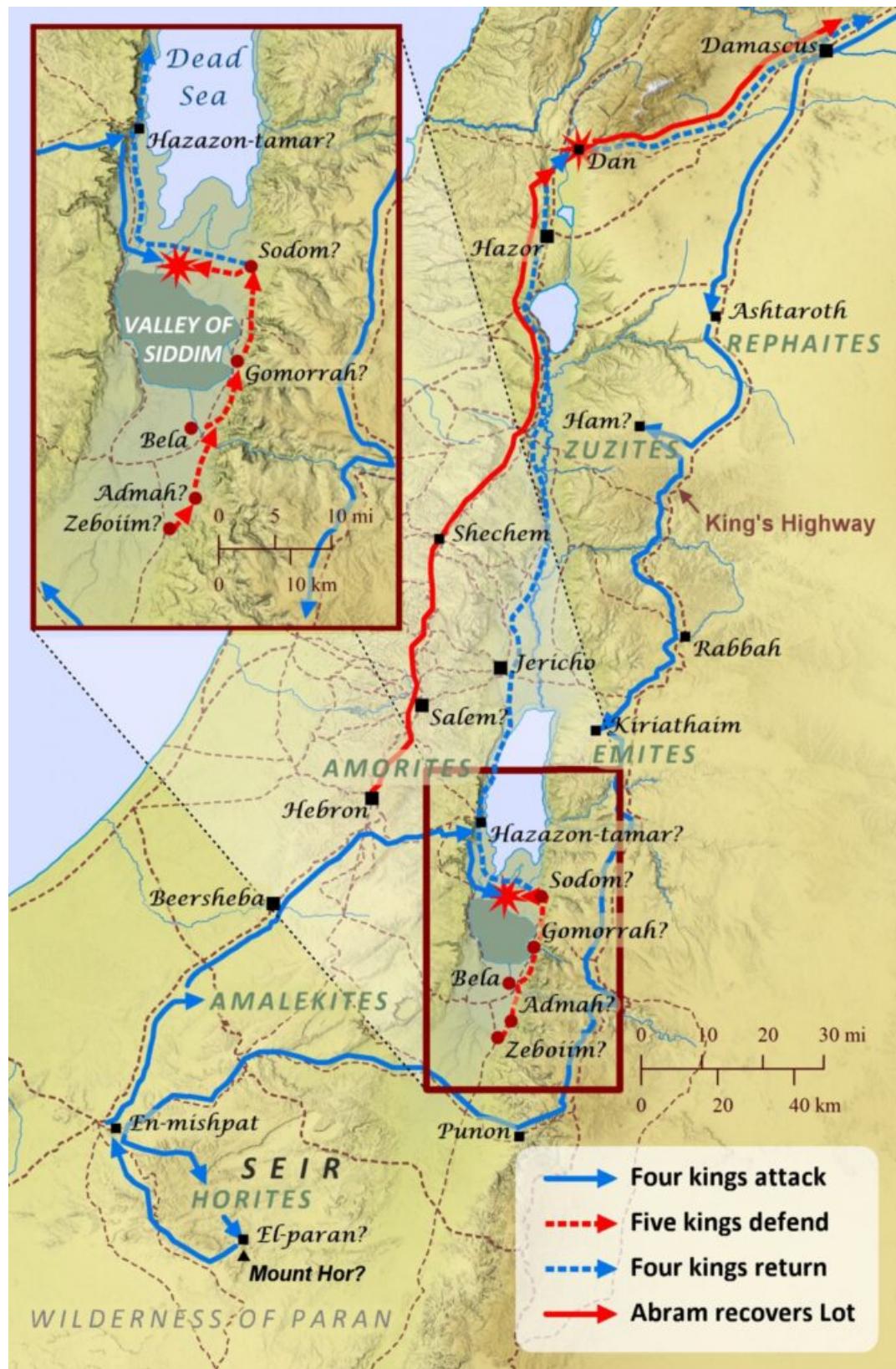
Melchizedek is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18 where he brought forth **bread and wine** to Abram. He was the priest of the most-high God (Father) and He (Melchizedek, son) blessed Abram of the most-high God (Father) possessor of heaven and earth. Blessed by the most-high God (Father) which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands and Abram gave Him (Melchizedek, son of the most-high God) tithes of all.

This is the first mention of tithes in the scriptures. What did Melchizedek do with the tithes? He consumed it as other times, like in Genesis 15:7-17 and 1 Kings 18:22-39.

Abram knew this king; he had probably asked for his help and blessings before going into battle. Abram had heard His (Melchizedek's) voice speak to him in Genesis 12, by faith he obeyed, he was looking for a city with foundations whose architect and builder is God (see Hebrews 11). We should all be looking and ready to enter that city for it is real. Revelation 21 describes it.

Now look at Genesis 14. Abram had just traveled to the northern limit of ancient Israel

nearly 200 miles on foot, to the city of Dan (going past Salem both on the way to Dan and on the way back to Sodom) and then chased the enemy further north to Hobah, where Abram conquered them and rescued his brother who had been taken captive in the battle.



On the way home to take back the captives and the spoils of victory, Abram was met by Melchizedek in Salem, and paid Him tithe. It is a reasonable assumption to believe Melchizedek gave Abram his blessing as Abram was traveling to rescue his nephew, Lot, but this is not in the Bible. Only the return trip is described. The three verses in Genesis 14:18-20, seem to be out of place in regards to timing and geographical location. Dan and Hoboth are roughly 150 miles north of Salem. And Salem is roughly 80 miles north of Sodom (map is from: The Battle at the Valley of Siddim, www.BibleMapper.com/blog/index.php/2021/07/19/the-battle-at-the-valley-of-Siddim/). This would make it impossible for verse 17 to occur before verses 18 to 20. Another possibility is that Melchizedek could have blessed Abram on his way to rescue his nephew Lot, who was captured and living in Dan. Either way, Abram was entitled to take the conquered people and their goods with him, including his rescued nephew, Lot. As victorious Abram is returning and passing by the city of Salem, the King, Melchizedek, goes out to meet him, taking him **bread and wine**. If you read the entire chapter, it seems verses 18 to 20 should precede verse 17. Any experts weighing in on a better explanation would be much appreciated, however, this “anomaly” does not detract in any way from Melchizedek’s roles as King of Righteousness and High Priest.

Barne’s Notes on the Whole Bible, comments on Genesis 14:18, “Here it comes out clearly that Melkizedec acts not only in a civil but in a sacred capacity... It is the part of the father to bless the child, of the patriarch or superior to bless the subject or inferior, and of the priest to bless the people (Hebrews 7:7)... The Most High God is here further designated as the Founder of heaven and earth, the great Architect or Builder, and there, Possessor of all things. There is here no indistinct allusion to the creation of ‘heaven and earth,’ mentioned in the opening of the Book of God. This is a manifest identification of the God of Melkizedec with the one Creator and Upholder of all things. We have here no mere local or national deity with limited power and province, but the sole and supreme God of the universe and of man.”

Melchizedek priest of the most-high God appeared unto Abram in the likeness of an earth priest. This Priest was also a King. No earth king was ever a priest. Who on earth or heaven itself could be holy enough for our Priest in heaven to have been made like unto but God himself? (See Hebrews 5:10 and John 14:8-11.) If we follow the ‘Bread and Wine’ motif given to Abram by Melchizedek, we see the same motif at the Last Supper, right before Christ assumes the role as a once-and-for-all-time sacrifice for sin, the Atonement.

Section 2: Salem

What about the city of Salem where Melchizedek was King and High Priest? Had Abram ever heard of Salem before? Could it be the city he was looking for when God called him out of his country to a land, which he would show him, and make of him a great nation? (See Genesis 12:1-4 and Hebrews 11:8-10.) Or was Salem a small city somewhere in the land of Canaan? This is where Moses describes Melchizedek meeting with Abram and giving him bread and wine.

The Salem of Genesis 14:18. is a very large city, large enough to hold anyone who is willing to trust and by faith accept and follow Abram's God, creator of heaven and earth, the sea and fountains of water (See Revelation 14:7 and Exodus 20:8-11).

Where is Salem? In Psalm 26:1,2, it says in Judah is God known, His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion (see Hebrews 12:22).

Jesus was born in Judea. He was of the tribe of Judah (see Matthew 2:1,2). Notice how Jerusalem is spelled: Jeru**Salem**. Jerusalem got its name from the tribe of Judah (see Genesis 49:8-10; Psalms 60:7; Hebrews 12:18-22; and Revelation 21:1-27). It is the City of Gold, as known by the inhabitants and the City of God as described in Psalm 48:2 and Matthew 5:35. It is also referred to as the "City of the Great King."

If Jerusalem is the City of God, then Salem is also in heaven, where Jesus is now, as our intercessor between God and man, securing our salvation.

Section 3: Who was Melchizedek? Who was Jesus?

Melchizedek was the Son of God, our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary from the time of Adam's sin, until he was born into this world as the Lamb of God (see Genesis 3:1-15). In Hebrews 8:5 and 9:23-28, He was the great "I am" who spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-4 and Deuteronomy 34:10). He was the Lord God who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exodus 20:1-3). Hebrews 7:2, describes Melchizedek as the King of Salem, which is also known as, King of peace. Melchizedek blessed Abram and ensured the future covenant He would make with Abraham and Sarah - their descendants would be as numerous as the sands on earth and

the stars in the sky.

In Genesis 49:1-10, Jacob is blessing his sons, and verse 10 refers to Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 7 verses 6, 13, 14, 15-17, and 20, Paul refers to Jesus, Son of God our High Priest, not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, referring to Melchizedek, Son of God, without Father, without Mother, beginning of days or ending of life.

Read Hebrews 7:1-21. Notice in verses 20, 21, and 22, the Lord God (Father) swore to the Son of God (Jesus) and would not repent. You (Son) are a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Son of God) High Priest before the cross.

He was the baby who was born in a manger, the angels called a Savior, Christ the Lord to the shepherds (Luke 2:3-12.). He was the One who was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:1-12).

He was the Lamb of God who would pay the price of eternal life for whosoever believes in Him should not perish (John 3:16.). His name is now Jesus Christ, our only means of salvation. (See Acts 4:10-12). He came to pay a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we could not pay (Acts 20:28).

Read Hebrew 5:5-7, about Melchizedek in the days of His flesh, meaning Jesus the Son of God who offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him (God the Father) that was able to save Him from death (Matthew 26:38-46 and Luke 22:41-46).

In Hebrews 5:10 and 11, Jesus was called (of God the Father) to be a Priest after the order of Melchizedek (High Priest before the cross) of whom the apostle Paul says there are many things to say and hard to be uttered or understood, referring to Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:11).

Now in all the Holy Bible, there are many things to study and talk about, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, about God the Great "I Am," our Creator, our Intercessor, our High Priest, the Lamb of God.

At no time in the Bible does it say Melchizedek is from the line of Seth, Noah or Shem. There are differences between Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthoods. Perfection is found in the Melchizedek priesthood but not in the priesthood of Levi (Hebrews 7:11). Melchizedek is greater than Levi (Hebrews 7:7). The Melchizedek priesthood offered Bread

and Wine sacrifices and not animal sacrifices. The Melchizedek priesthood needs only the blood of the Messiah and not animal sacrifice (Hebrews 10). The Levitical priesthood system is a copy and shadow of the heavenly Melchizedek priesthood (Hebrews 8:5). It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, but the Messiah saves completely through His priesthood (Hebrews 10:4 and 7:25). Levitical sacrifices had to be offered up day by day but the Messiah's offering of His blood under the Melchizedek priesthood was once and for all (Hebrews 7:27).

<https://landofhoneyblog.blogspot.com/2019/07/comparing-melchizedek-and-levitical.html?m=1>

Jesus is the Son of God and the one who received the tithes of Abram. Hebrews 7:6-8 says, here men that die receive tithes, but there He (Jesus, Melchizedek) receiveth them of who it is witnessed that He liveth.

Melchizedek (מלכי-צדק)	The Messiah (הchrist)
King of Righteousness (Heb. 7:2) מלך הצדקה	The Anointed (King): "Mashiach" הchrist
King of Peace (Heb. 7:2) מלך שלום	The Prince of Peace שליטם
Priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:18) כהן לאל עליון	High Priest of Eternity (Heb. 6:20; 8:1) כהן נדול לעולם
Both King and Priest (Heb. 7:1-3) מלך וכohen	Both King and Priest (Zech. 6:12-13) מלך
No Torah genealogy (Heb. 7:3) לא חותמות	The Eternal Word of God (John 1:1-3;14) דבר אלhim
Not of the seed of Aaron (Heb. 7:6) לא כניעת אהרן	From the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14) בני יהודה צמיה
Greater than the Levite priests (Heb. 7:6-10)	Greater avodah than the High Priest and the altar at the Tabernacle (Heb. 7:26-28)
Based on Word of Oath (Psalm 110:4) דבר-השבועה	Eternal Priesthood (Heb. 7:24-25) כהן לעולם
Offered bread and wine (Gen. 14:18)	Offered bread and wine (Luke 22:17,19)

He was the King of the Jews who was crucified, buried, and rose the third day, was seen of many (John 19:15, 18, 31, 42; John 20:26-30; John 24:45-53; and Acts 1:1-3). He has ascended to heaven now our Savior, He pleads for us to come now and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:18).

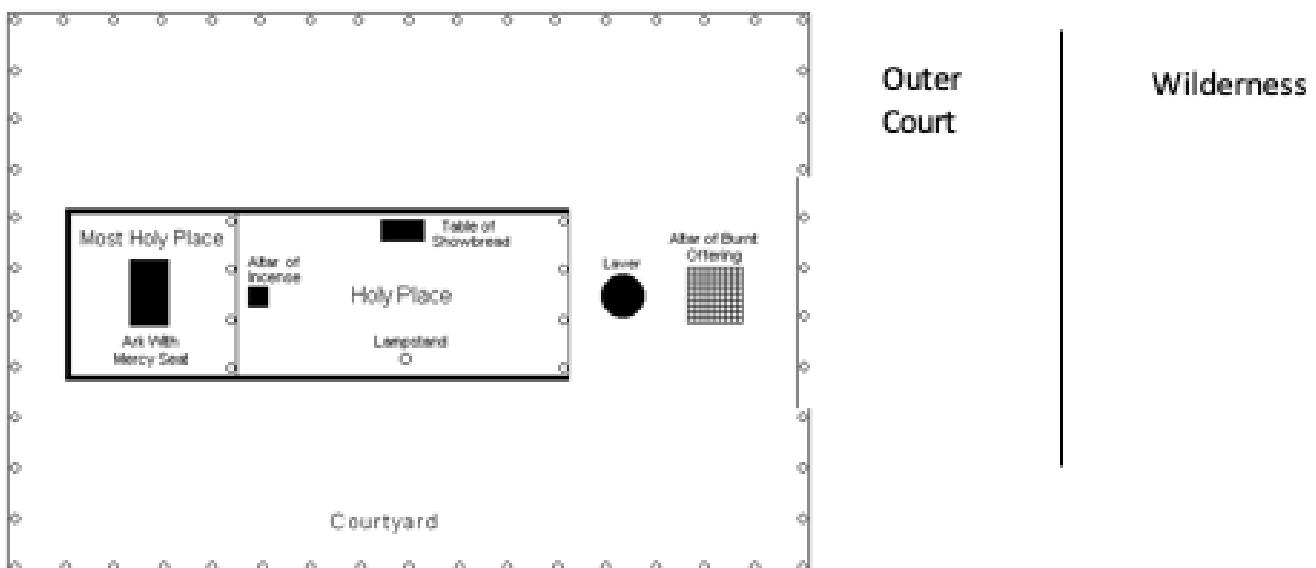
So, who was Melchizedek, priest of the most-high God? He was Jesus to the great Jehovah God (Matthew 3:17). 2 Chronicles 20:20 says, believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established, believe his prophets so shall you prosper.

Christ died broken-hearted on a cross for our sins, because it is not the will of the Father in heaven that one of His children be lost. He would have died for just one sinner (Matthew

18:11-14). "Oh the depth of our Father's love" (Romans 11:32,33).

Section 4: Melchizedek in various sanctuary roles

Basic representation of the Israelite's sanctuary for reference



About 6,000 years ago, the human race consisting of two people, was at a crossroads. Adam and Eve had been sent out of their beautiful garden for disobeying their Creator. They were naked and afraid. Now their Creator stood in the gap that separated them from their perfect dwelling place, Eden. Instead of God cursing them, He cursed the serpent and the ground; He did not curse the woman in childbirth or curse any aspect of childbirth. His words were descriptive of how life would be, living under the oppression and imprint of sin. In the presence of Adam, Eve, and the serpent, the Creator states, "And I will put enmity [deep-seated, enduring hostility] between thee [the serpent] and the woman [Eve; also represents the true church], and between thy seed [evil angels; those who follow Satan and act in opposition to God's will; spiritual descendants of Satan] and her seed [inhabitants of the earth; ultimately it refers to Jesus Christ, the ultimate Deliverer of mankind]; it [Jesus Christ] shall bruise thy head [a fatal blow to Satan] and thou [serpent] shalt bruise His heel [the crucifixion of Christ]. This verse sums up the entire New Testament. It prophesies the

future conflict which culminates in the serpent's final destruction.

A better way to visualize this disturbance between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is to read Revelation 12, where the woman, serpent, and seed themes from Genesis are repeated. The proclamation in the Garden of Eden was not a thinly veiled threat against Satan, it was the threat of all-out war and ultimate victory against Satan and his evil angels. They now had an expiration date. There was no doubt in Satan's mind about his final fate. From this moment onward, Jesus Christ began to play the roles necessary for our salvation: High Priest, King, and Sacrificial Lamb / Redeemer. From this vantage point, Christ sacrificed the first lamb in the Garden of Eden to use the skins as cover and protection for Adam and Eve. He could have used any other material, including plants, to cover them, but he chose a perfect lamb, one that Adam had named. He initiated the sacrificial system, meant to deter man from sinning. Jesus has never for one second abandoned the human race. He has always been present on the earth working on behalf of the human race for our salvation. He does not sleep. He constantly mediates on our behalf, to His Father. Our prayers reach the God of heaven when we pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

Christ, the Son of God, provided Adam and Eve with skins to cover their shame. This is where we may take some creative license. I imagine our loving God and Creator (i.e., Christ) going to the lambs He had just created and Adam had named. The animals and birds were created before Adam, so it is likely the animals and birds witnessed the creation of Adam and Eve. Jesus must have started a conversation with the lambs. I like to think the Creator explained the plan of salvation to them. He also explained that a terrible but necessary ritual must precede His own sacrifice. He would sacrifice one of the little lambs He had created and many more would follow in the first lamb's footsteps, but the ultimate sacrifice would be Jesus, their Creator. I think Jesus had this conversation with the lamb He slaughtered. I would like to believe that God the Son promised all the little lambs and other sacrificial animals, they would be restored back to their Edenic home someday. We are not given the details of this sacrifice but we can be assured Jesus will perfectly restore what was lost. This first death in all of the earth came at the hands of Jesus. He made the sacrifice and what a difficult sacrifice it must have been.

Enoch was born approximately 622 years after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden. Before the flood (2472 B.C.), we are told Enoch walked with God. We know God brought Enoch, His friend, to heaven. Enoch was the first of the human race, after Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden, to be rescued from earth and is now living in Heaven. What might be mistaken as hubris on God's part for taking Enoch to heaven, was just another salvo to Satan, confirming his original covenant with Adam and Eve.

After the flood, the Son of God appears as Melchizedek, both a King and High Priest. Abraham was born about 400 years after the flood. Abraham and Melchizedek were contemporaries. Melchizedek's early contact with Abram, began with Melchizedek giving Abram a blessing in battle. Genesis 14:19,20, describes Melchizedek blessing Abram, "Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you'" (reminiscent of God's warning to the serpent in Genesis 3:15). A few chapters later, the Heavenly Visitor made a covenant with Abram and Sarai described in full in Genesis 17.

In Genesis 18, the Lord appears to Abraham again in the form of Himself and two angelic visitors. During that visit, Abram increasingly began to realize the nature of his guests. Genesis 18:20-22, identifies one of the guests as the Lord God and the other two as angels. "So the Lord told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know. The other men turned and headed toward Sodom, but the Lord remained with Abraham."

Before leaving, the angels told Abram, "I will surely return to you about this time next year. Your wife Sarah, will have a son." Initially, Abraham believed the covenant would be fulfilled through Ishmael, but God told him differently; Abraham and Sarah would conceive a son and his name should be called Isaac. Abraham likely remembered his meeting with Melchizedek and receiving His blessing. Melchizedek's priesthood was not a Levitical priesthood of animal sacrifices but consisted of Bread and Wine sacrifices and blessings, which pointed to and played out in the Last Supper as Jesus symbolically offered up His body as Bread and His blood as Wine, for the salvation of man.

The Last Supper and New Covenant of His blood is described in all four Gospels. This scenario plays out in Luke 22, "And He took the bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup, after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.' "

The animal sacrifices in the courtyard were one of the primary duties of the priests. The priests acted as mediators between God and the people (much like Christ sacrificing the first lamb in the Garden of Eden). Melchizedek acted in the role of High Priest, offering bread and wine as a forward-facing prophecy pointing to when He would offer Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. In another role, Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb, providing for the atonement for all people who accept Him. The animal sacrifices for the Israelites were only

performed by Levites, including Aaron and his descendants who were Levites, distinguishing the Levite priests from Jesus Christ who was descended from the Tribe of Judah and Melchizedek who was a Priest before the pre-Israelite Jerusalem. This is an important point. The pre-Israelite Melchizedek offered blessings and symbolic sacrifices of Bread and Wine before there was an Israelite sanctuary service. The animal sacrifice initiated in the Garden of Eden by Jesus continued until the time of His sacrifice on the cross. Melchizedek, as King and High Priest, began to point toward a different covenant, one of Bread and Wine. A time when we REMEMBER Christ's sacrifice on the cross instead of LOOKING FORWARD to His sacrifice on the cross. Breaking Bread and drinking Wine is not Jewish but is symbolic of Melchizedek's priesthood and kingly rule over Salem and the surrounding area and it directly points to Christ on the cross.

About 2,000 years ago in the temple at Jerusalem, the hour of the evening sacrifice arrives. The priest stands in the courtyard of the temple ready to offer a lamb as a sin sacrifice. As he raises the knife to kill the lamb, the earth violently convulses. Terrified, the priest drops the knife and the lamb escapes. Over the din of the earthquake he hears a loud ripping noise as an unseen hand tears the thick veil of the temple separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, from top to bottom. At that same moment, just outside the city walls, Jesus crucified and hanging on a cross, died at a place known as Golgotha, or the "Place of the Skull." Crucifixions took place outside the city walls to keep the Holy City pure and to be consistent with the Old Testament requirements to burn sin offerings outside of the camp. It also symbolizes transferring all the sins to the scapegoat sending it into the wilderness to die.

Back to the lamb which escaped the daily sacrifice as Jesus died on the cross. The last required sacrificial lamb was Jesus. Just a few feet across town, swirling black clouds enshroud a cross. When Jesus, the Passover Lamb of God, calls out, "It is finished!" He dies for the sins of the world. Type has met antitype. The very event the Sanctuary services have pointed to from the beginning of Adam and Eve's sojourn on earth, has been fulfilled. The Saviour has completed His atoning sacrifice, and because the symbol has met reality, the rituals foreshadowing this sacrifice have been superseded. Thus, the ripped veil, the dropped knife, and the escaped lamb.

In Christ's death on the cross, He bore all of our sins and infirmities. The sanctuary equivalent of this is seen in the Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) ritual, pointing to the Cross. This involved two goats, one sacrificed and one sent to the wilderness (both goats were roles played by Christ). Two nearly identical goats were brought to the entrance of the sanctuary. Lots were cast to determine their fate. The High Priest would symbolically transfer the sins of the Israelites onto the live goat by confessing these sins over the animal.

This goat was known as the scapegoat. It was led into the wilderness and set free, signifying the removal of one's confessed sins from the Israelite camp. Christ is mediating in the heavenly sanctuary right now, removing our confessed sins and taking them as far as the east is from the west. He is placing our sins in the deepest trench of the ocean. Christ fulfilled every role in the sanctuary. He was sacrificed and sent "to the wilderness" to bear our sins. He rose triumphant. The grave could not contain Him! We are the benefactors of His work on our behalf. We must only accept Him and live in ways that point others to Him!

Satan plays no role in any aspect of our salvation except as an antagonist. Christ plays all roles of the protagonist. Christ defeats every wrong accusation of the Devil. There is more to understand about salvation; it reaches even beyond the cross. Jesus' resurrection and ascension direct our attention from the earthly sanctuary and sacrificial system to the heavenly sanctuary, where sacrifices are unnecessary and Christ ministers as a High Priest. The atoning sacrifice has been offered (Hebrews 9:28); now it is available to all (see the Doctrine of Last Things, Chapter 23, Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary). Jesus died, rested in the grave over a three-day period, and arose on the third day. He stayed a little while on earth before triumphantly ascending to Heaven. The welcome home celebration in heaven must have been epic. Nothing more could be done to convince the heavenly dwellers of the goodness of God. The doubt Lucifer sowed amongst the heavenly dwellers was erased; no one was left to doubt or cast a shadow on the work of Christ our Mediator.

Right now, Jesus Christ is in the presence of His Father. He is either symbolically or literally, sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus is acting in one of His closing roles as Judge and King who will soon come to claim His people. The sanctuary service, which began in the Garden of Eden with the first animal sacrifice, the promise of a Redeemer and Saviour and the promise to restore what was lost, comes from the Son of God who put His life on the line to save ours.

The containment of sinful humans and sinful angels to planet earth sets the stage for our redemption. The sanctuary service is like a fractal which plays out trillions of times for God's people. When we sin, we go to God for forgiveness, at some point in a progressively dedicated Christian life, sinning becomes untenable and ultimately, we get victory over sin (i.e., we are still sinners with the quantum imprint of sin on our bodies and mind (a noun) but we don't sin (as a verb), but as forgiven and contrite humans, we will always plead for God's mercy and forgiveness). As humans, our role is as a juror, but instead of just sitting in a jury box and listening to two opposite sides present their case, our lives and actions are a type of daily juror, voting on the verdict: guilty or innocent. Our verdict is our free will choices to affirm the vindication of God's character or to doubt and give shade to evil and

ultimately choose permanent death.

The way we live, following the commandments, acting as the hands and feet of Jesus, distinguishes us as His redeemed people or not. The final sanctuary service, occurs when Satan, his evil angels and all of the wicked are destroyed (aka, hell). The entire universe will be clean. Sin and sinners are no more. One pulse of harmony and gladness will beat throughout illimitable space. The entire universe of heavenly inhabitants as well as all things animate and inanimate, will joyfully declare that God is love!

This is an epic sweep of time, but the details of the Sanctuary described in Hebrews 9, remain the same but with different symbology. Paul describes the sanctuary here, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick and the table and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary." These symbols are repeated in Revelation 1:4,5,6,7,12,13,18,20, where John introduces Jesus as our High Priest, Jesus as the Faithful Witness and First Begotten of the Dead, Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb, Prince of the kings of the earth, Jesus who washed us from our sins in His own blood, Jesus standing and walking among the seven golden candlesticks found in the Holy Place of the sanctuary, Jesus writing letters to the seven churches, etc.

The words, "Tabernacle," "Temple," or "Sanctuary" appear throughout Revelation. We are living in the time described in Revelation. It is important to understand the symbols and typology (events pointing to our salvation). There is much more Sanctuary symbology in Revelation, but below are some examples:

- Revelation 5:5,6, introduces the **Lamb**, the central animal used in the sacrificial system.
- The **Alter of Burnt Offering** is mentioned in Revelation 6 under the fifth seal.
- There are golden bowls full of **incense** symbolizing the prayers of the saints before God, Revelation 5:8.
- The **golden censer and golden alter of incense** are mentioned in Revelation 8:3,5.
- Revelation 11:1,2 refers to using a rod used to measure the temple of God and the altar and them that worship therein. "But the **court which is without the temple**, leave out and measure it not."
- Revelation 11:8, refers to the crucifixion of Christ, the **Lamb of God** (v. 8). Verse 13, refers to "...and at the same hour was there a great earthquake... This may be a reference to the prior earthquake at Jesus' death which was accompanied by the veil between the Holy and Most Holy Place being divinely torn from top to bottom..." We are told earthquakes will be prevalent at the end of time (Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:8

and Luke 21:11). Earthquakes in the Bible symbolize divine intervention and judgment. It also symbolizes God's control over creation and they are a powerful demonstration of His sovereignty.

- Revelation 11:19 mentions the **Ark of the Covenant**, found in the Most Holy Place and contains the **10 commandments**.
- Revelation chapters 16 to 20 reveal **God's intercession for us in the Most Holy Place**.
- In Revelation 21:2, we read, "And I John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband." This ties Melchizedek's Salem, to the **New Jerusalem which is in Heaven**. The type (lamb, animal) meets Anti-type (Jesus Christ). The sanctuary theme used throughout the Bible to describe Christ's ministry for man, is complete. There is no more need for a literal or symbolic sanctuary because God dwells with us.
- Revelation 21:20 which gives a description of the **jeweled foundation** of the New Jerusalem refers to the **twelve gemstones in the Israelite's High Priest's breastplate**, each stone representing one of the **twelve tribes of Israel** (Exodus 28:21; 39:14).
- In Revelation 21:3,22, John describes the ending of sanctuary symbols and places God's presence among the redeemed, **"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."** Just like Abram paid Melchizedek a 10% tithe, the "kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it [New Jerusalem found in Heaven]." Exodus 24:10, describes when the 70 elders saw the God of Israel with a "pavement of sapphire stone" under His feet. Ezekiel 1:26 and 10:1, describe Ezekiel's vision of a throne with the appearance like a "sapphire stone" above the firmament. Each mention of sapphire stones is meant to highlight God's kingship, sovereignty, purity, justice, righteousness, divine law (the 10 Commandments), the holiness of His presence, and His majestic and divine authority.
- The "Lamb" motif plays throughout the whole Bible. From the first death known to occur in Heaven, to the triumphant Lamb of God.
- The **Laver** in the Courtyard is symbolic being washed clean and removing one's filthy robes and taking on Christ's righteousness. Before the Levitical priests could enter the Sanctuary, they had to be clean and forgiven of all sin. Jesus, instead of washing His hands in the laver, washed His disciples' feet, changing the laws concerning the laver. This motivates us to remain undefiled and clean. John 13:10, "those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are not clean, though not every one of you."
- Burning **incense on the Alter of Incense in the Holy Place** symbolized the prayers of people ascending to God. Now we pray directly to God in the name of Jesus, who

constantly mediates for us, before His Father.

- Tending the **lampstand** in the Holy Place required oil and provided light. Oil in the Bible represents the Holy Spirit, God's blessings and consecration for holy purposes. Oil was used for anointing kings, prophets and priests. It symbolizes joy, abundance and undivided favor.
- In Revelation 1:13, John states, "And in the midst of the **seven candlesticks** one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." There he saw the items that the furnishings of the holy place of the earthly sanctuary were modeled after, such as seven lamp stands (Rev. 1:12) and an altar of incense (Rev. 8:3).

Section 5: EGW Writings Mentioning Melchizedek

There are 41 mentions of Melchizedek in EGW's writings. There are several sets of duplicates and triplicates which would bring the number of original mentions to between 17 to 20. There is only one curious EGW quote about Melchizedek, which on the surface does not appear to support the rest of her comments. It is the last quote on the following list. If one only uses Scriptures for building a hypothesis about Melchizedek, there is significant support for a pre-incarnate Christ standing in as Melchizedek. Is it "foundational" we believe this or is there room for differing opinions? Knowing Jesus is foundational to our salvation. Knowing Jesus gives us the greatest degree of hope and peace. If I have a dear friend who lives far away, I think about ways to stay in touch with them, make plans to visit them, figure out various ways to communicate and keep the friendship fresh. After almost 2,000 years before the flood and 2,000 years after the flood before the Son of God appeared in the flesh, He came in the form of Melchizedek. The primary purpose of Melchizedek was to point toward Christ's earthly ministry. Below are the Ellen White quotes:

- I listened this morning to a most intelligent testimony from a Swedish brother. This young man has talent that he can improve in the Master's service; will he consecrate to God all his talents? Brother Law bore an excellent testimony. He stated that Abraham gave tithes of all that he possessed to Melchizedek. 3LtMs, Lt 44, 1876, par. 5.
- We are living under the Melchizedek priesthood and he could not see why the same duty was not required of us as we were now living under the Melchizedek priesthood. If it were obligatory upon Abraham to give tithes of all he possessed, it certainly is

obligatory upon us... 3LtMs, Lt44, 1876, par. 6.

- Ask Abraham, he will tell you, It is "Melchizedek King of Salem," King of Peace. Genesis 14:18. DA 578.4
- Another who came out to welcome the victorious patriarch was Melchizedek, king of Salem, who brought forth bread and wine for the refreshment of his army. As "Priest of the most-high God," he pronounced a blessing upon Abraham and gave thanks to the Lord, who had wrought so great a deliverance by His servant. And Abraham "gave Him tithes of all." PP 136.1.
- These offerings were continued through successive generations. The principle was not unknown in the days of Job. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most-high God. Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and penniless wanderer, promised the Lord, "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." ST March 18.
- God has never left Himself without witness of the earth. At one time Melchizedek represented the Lord Jesus Christ in person to reveal the truth of heaven and perpetuate the law of God... 20LtMs, Lt 190, 1905, par. 2.
- But the tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest time, the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most-high God. Genesis 14:20... PP 525.2.
- As soon as David was established on the throne of Israel, he began to see a more appropriate location for the capital of his realm. Twenty miles from Hebron a place was selected as the future metropolis of the kingdom. Before Joshua had led the armies of Israel over Jordan, it had been called Salem. Near this place, Abraham had proved his loyalty to God. Eight hundred years before the coronation of David, it had been the home of Melchizedek, the priest of the most-high God... PP 703.1.
- Christ rent not His robe as did Caiaphas. He gave up His body to be rent, to be bruised, to be wounded for the transgression of the world. As by His own choice, He died in the presence of an assembled nation of worshipers, type met antitype. Priest and victim combined, He entered the temple as a place of sacrifice. Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. He was the Lamb slain for the foundation of the world. He is a true High Priest, for after enduring humiliation, shame, and reproach, after being crucified and buried, He was raised from the grave, triumphing over death. He is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. 12LtMs, Ms 101, 1897, par.36.
- ...The position of priest was bought and sold like goods of merchandise. Thus it as that Caiaphas obtained the office. He was not a priest after the order of Melchizedek, but God's appointment. He was bought and sold to work wickedness. He never knew what is was to be obedient to God. He had the form of godliness and this gave him the power to oppress. 12LtMs, Ms 102, 1897, par. 17.

- Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto hi, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek... 13 LtMs, Ms 24, 1898, par. 13.
- Of Christ we read, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." [Hebrews 5:8-11.] 13LtMs, Ms 115, 1898, par. 32.
- The perfect work of Christ, which atoned for our sins, hath brought in everlasting righteousness, and hath made perfect and everlasting peace, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth in to that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." [Hebrews 6:19, 20.] 9LtMs, Lt 100, 1894, par. 9.
- The priesthood of Christ commenced as soon as man had sinned. He was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek... 7LtMs, Ms 43b, 1891, par. 5.
- This is the experience we may have and must have, as those who have been blessed with great light. "When God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." [Hebrews 6:17-20.] 12LtMs, Lt 45, 1897, par. 8.
- ...The way was laid open, the veil was rent in twain. Man could approach God without sacrificial offerings, without the service of priest. Christ Himself was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Heaven was His home. He came to this world to reveal the Father. His work on the field of His humiliation and conflict was now done. He ascended up into the heavens, and is forever set down on the right hand of God. 12 Lt Ms, Ms 128, 1897, par. 30.
- It was Christ that spoke through Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchizedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father. 1SM 409.3.

Section 6: Summary

Christ's work as High Priest is nearing its completion. "We have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest (a reference to Melchizedek's and Christ's roles on earth) who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Melchizedek, the pre-incarnate Christ, came to earth to begin to establish the New Covenant. Instead of animal sacrifices, his offerings of Bread and Wine pointed to the New Covenant, established at the cross. Isaiah 45:6,7, describes how Christ has taken full responsibility for the problem of sin and has provided the way for the salvation of mankind. "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

We as Christians must stand in the gap until He returns, being His hands and feet. The length of our lives is unimportant in regards to our salvation. Whether we die of natural causes or as a martyr for Christ, we need to live for and live like Christ lived - don't let anything interfere with this journey. Don't miss out on the most incredible experiences of being a Christ follower - getting to know Him and falling in love with Him.

Who Is This? by Ellen G. White (4Red 127.2; adapted)

As Jesus, riding a donkey, descends on Jerusalem a week before His crucifixion, a crowd forms. Let's pick up the story.

As the procession is about to descend the Mount of Olives, it is intercepted by the rulers.

They inquire who and what is the cause of all this tumultuous rejoicing. As they, with much authority, repeat their question, "Who is this?"

The disciples, filled with a spirit of inspiration, are heard above all the noise of the crowd, repeating in eloquent strains the prophecies which answered this question.

Adam will tell you, it is the seed of the woman who shall bruise the serpent's head.

Ask Abraham, he will tell you, it is Melchizedek, King of Salem, King of Peace.

Jacob will tell you, He is Shiloh of the tribe of Judah.

Isaiah will tell you, Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Jeremiah will tell you, the Branch of David, the Lord, our righteousness.

Daniel will tell you, He is the Messiah.

Hosea will tell you, He is the Lord God of Hosts, the Lord is his memorial.

John the Baptist will tell you, He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

The great Jehovah has proclaimed from his throne, This is my beloved Son.

We, his disciples, declare, this is Jesus, the Messiah, the Prince of Life, the Redeemer of the world.

And even the Prince of the powers of darkness acknowledges him, saying, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

There is no other like him. Get to know him, don't miss out on this incredible journey to eternity with Him.

The Invitation by Morris Venden (adapted)

There is not a sin God doesn't hate!

There is not a sin God doesn't want to forgive (except for grieving the Holy Spirit)!

There is not a sinner God doesn't want to rescue and take to Heaven!

There is no better time than now to get to get to know and to accept God!

Section 7: Study questions and comments

1. What are your reasons for or against believing Melchizedek was Christ?
2. What is the significance of Melchizedek's High Priest and King roles?
3. Is the timing of Melchizedek's time on earth significant?
4. As Christ is interceding for us in the Most Holy Place, should we be laisse faire about our sin or should we abhor it and seek to be sinless (this does not mean we are not sinners, because all have sinned)?
5. Examples?

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Authors

Hallie Spraggins Whitten, Crystal Whitten, PhD, MS, RDN, Chaplain

Contact

phytochemwhitten@yahoo.com

Reviewers

If you wish to be a reviewer, please contact me at the above email address.