

- I. Welcome
 - A. Good morning! Ohayougozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni.
 1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*
 - B. Before we continue any further let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School classrooms.
 1. *(2nd Service; Remember to dismiss the Bible English class.)*
 - C. Well, I hope you all had a wonderful Christ-filled Christmas celebration over this last week with family and friends, or maybe friends that are more like family in this particular season of life.
 1. For Farah and I, we were so blessed to be able to have all of our boys with us on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
 2. We realize that the older we get the more and more difficult it becomes to get the whole family together. We cherish the times we can have them all together and encourage you all to do the same.
 - D. This morning, we're coming back to our systematic study through the book of Hebrews. We last left off finishing up chapter 6 of Hebrews and so this morning we will be making our way into chapter 7.
 1. This morning we're going to cover a subject matter that has piqued a great many of people's interests; a mystery of sorts from the Bible.
 2. And who doesn't love a good mystery, right? Farah and I over the Christmas season cooperated together in an advent calendar escape room like board game called "The Missing Hollywood Star".
 3. The game centered upon finding and saving the missing star from a Hollywood film studio. It's basically a game with daily riddles and puzzles and hidden codes that are used to unlock doors for the next day, counting our way down to Christmas. It was a lot of fun.
 4. I've always enjoyed riddles and puzzles and trying to figure out how things work and how things fit together. In our account today, we're going to try and fit together some clues that have been left behind for us regarding a very mysterious man of the Bible. A man by the name of Melchizedek.
 - E. Our text this morning is going to be Hebrews chapter 7 verses 1-10 and the title of our study is going to be **"Who is this King?"**.
 1. Hopefully you all have a Bible with you this morning. If not, feel free to reach down and borrow one of the Bibles that are situated underneath some of the chairs surrounding you. We do think it important to be able to follow along in the Word and for you to read the Word for yourself and allow it to speak to you.
 2. Once you are there in Hebrews chapter 7, I'd like to invite you all to rise to your feet in honor of the Lord and His Word.

3. I'm going to read through the entirety of our text from my Bible, do your best to follow along in your own. The author of Hebrews continues his letter with the following in chapter 7 verse 1... (R & P)

- II. Review and Intro;
 - A. Last time we were in the book of Hebrews the author was finishing up a section of his letter that included both an exhortative word of caution and an encouraging word of consolation.
 1. The exhortative word of caution had to do with the spiritual immaturity of his audience and the need for them to grow in their faith, to move beyond the elementary principles of their faith; their spiritual ABC's if you will. They had become sluggish, dull of hearing, and the author didn't want that to develop into becoming sluggish in their living.
 2. The encouraging word of consolation had to do with inheriting the promises of God through faith and patience. How the audience can trust God and His promises; that they will come to pass in His perfect timing and to His glory and for our own good.
 - B. Now this isn't the first time we have come across the name Melchizedek in our study of the book of Hebrews.
 1. He was briefly mentioned in Hebrews chapter 5 when the author spoke of how Jesus became a High Priest for us. The author of Hebrews simply quoted from the OT book of Psalms where David, the sweet psalmist, spoke of the reign of the Messiah and how the Messiah would be a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. **(Ps. 110:4)**
 - a. The author of Hebrews took that quote from Psalms and attributed it to Jesus. Jesus was the Messiah foretold of throughout the ages. He came as the "anointed one", that's what the word Messiah literally means, it simply means "Anointed One". The word "Christ" is the Greek equivalent for the same thing; the anointed one.
 - b. He was the anointed one who came from the line of David and He was anointed by the Lord to serve as our Great High Priest. The author of Hebrews said that Jesus was of that same order, a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. **(Heb. 5:5)**
 - c. But no further details or descriptions of Melchizedek were given at that time. Simply a quote from the Old Testament book of Psalms and how Jesus was from the same order of Melchizedek.
 2. He was mentioned again later on in chapter 5 when the author spoke of how Jesus was called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." **(Heb. 5:10-11)**
 - a. The author had a lot to say about Melchizedek, but he was fearful that the audience wasn't spiritually mature enough to understand what he had to say. They had become dull of hearing and so he wasn't sure if they were ready to hear him out.
 - b. But again, no other details were given to us at that time.

3. Now that the author has finished his exhortation and his accompanying encouragement, he draws us back to the subject matter of Melchizedek.
 4. Who is this man and what does he have to do with Jesus? What do we know about Him and why was he so important to the author and the point he is trying to drive home here to his audience?
- C. These are the kinds of questions we're going to try and answer in our text this morning. The author finally gets around to giving us some details pertaining to this man and what his connection is to Jesus and the overall focus of his letter.
1. Remember that the author is writing to a Jewish community. A group of Jews who have come to faith in Jesus Christ and have put behind them their old ways of Judaism.
 2. However, they were beginning to experience increased amounts of persecution and pressure from both the Romans, who were ruling over the land at the time and didn't care for the constant controversies surrounding Christianity, and their own countrymen the Jews who saw Christianity as a form of Jewish heresy; believing that these Christians were teaching that there was another god named Jesus; a form of dualism that was contrary to their monotheistic views on the one true God; God Almighty.
 3. And because of this increased persecution and pressure some of these Jewish believers were thinking of leaving their faith in Christ and turning back towards Judaism and their old way of living.
 4. The author writes to them to show how foolish it would be to turn from Jesus. His main point is the supremacy and superiority of Jesus over everything found in Judaism.
 5. Anything that these Jews would go back to, would be something that was inferior to what they had in Jesus. Jesus is supreme over all.
 6. And the author is going to help prove this point by using this mysterious Old Testament figure known as Melchizedek.
- D. So let's dive in and gather the details and clues the author leaves for us so that we may be able to figure out who this man truly was and why he is so important to the author's case. Take a look at verses 1-3 where we are given a ton of details pertaining to who Melchizedek is.
- III. Hebrews 7:1-3; The description of Melchizedek
- A. Here in verses 1-3 we are given a lot of information, some of which the author will build upon later in our text. But to start off, I simply want to note the **various descriptions of Melchizedek** in order to build a portfolio of sorts regarding who this man was.
 - B. To begin with, we see from verse 1 that Melchizedek served as a king for a place referred to as Salem.
 1. Salem was a city situated high in the hills of Judah just west of the northernmost portion of the Dead Sea and later was more commonly referred to by the more recognizable name of Jerusalem.
 - a. David wrote in Psalm 76 about the city of Salem referring to it as the location of God's Tabernacle, His dwelling place in Zion. (**Ps. 76:2**)
 - b. The Tabernacle of the Lord and His dwelling place were atop the temple mount in Jerusalem. So, we know from the Bible that the city of Salem was a shortened version of the city of Jerusalem.
 - c. The word "Salem" is believed to be a derivative of the Hebrew word "shalom" which means "peace". The name "Jerusalem" is commonly referred to as the "city of peace".
 2. Something else worth noting about his title as King of Salem is that it would correlate him, based upon his title and the city he ruled over, as the **King of peace** as stated at the end of verse 2.
 3. Not only was he the King of Salem, the King of Peace, but his actual name in Hebrew literally means "king of righteousness".
 - a. The name "Melchizedek" is a compound word that comes from the Hebrew words "melek" which means "king" and the word "sedeq" which means righteousness or justice.
 - b. Putting them together we see that his name points us to yet another description of him. He was a just man, a man of righteousness, the **king of righteousness** in fact.
 4. These are quite the descriptors, king of peace and king of righteousness. It sounds a bit like someone else, but let's not jump too quickly to any conclusions. Let's carry on and see what else we can learn about this man.
 - C. We see also from verse 1 that not only was Melchizedek a king, but he was also a priest. And not just any priest, he was the priest of the Most High God; a title that was used to describe the one true God of heaven.
 1. The title "Most High God" is "*elyon Elohim*" and it is used exclusively for the one true God of the Bible.
 2. Though we are not told how this happened or when it happened, it is evident that God must have revealed Himself to Melchizedek in some form or fashion. And as a result of that revelation, Melchizedek became a worshipper of the Lord, and subsequently **a priest; serving the Most High God** and representing Him to the people he came in contact with.
 3. Now, something that I find very interesting and quite intriguing is the fact that later on, God would purposefully make a sharp distinction between the offices of king and priest. These roles were established as exclusive from each other; a king could not serve as priest, nor could a priest serve as king. There was a separation of these two roles.
 - a. There is record of certain kings he tried to take upon themselves the role and responsibilities of the priesthood, but their actions were met with swift judgment from the Lord.
 - i. King Saul is one of them. In 1 Samuel 13 Saul was instructed by the prophet Samuel to wait for him before going to battle. But

Saul got impatient with Samuel and decided to take matters into his own hands.

- ii. He told his men to bring to him a burnt offering and peace offerings and he decided to assume the position of priest himself and made offerings and supplications to the Lord.
 - iii. And the moment he completed making the offerings, lo and behold the prophet Samuel showed up and greatly rebuked him for not following his commands and for doing something that was unlawful for him to do as a king and as a member of the tribe of Benjamin. The role of priest was reserved for none other than those from the tribe of Levi.
 - iv. Because of his presumptuous act, Samuel informed Saul that his kingdom would no longer continue, and that God would seek for Himself a man after his own heart. Ultimately giving the kingdom over to David. **(1 Sam. 13:14)**
- b. Another king who presumed upon acting as priest was King Uzziah. King Uzziah became king when he was only 16 years old and he started off well; receiving great counsel from men around him like Zechariah, a man who had understanding of the ways of the Lord.
- i. But as the years went by he became puffed up with pride. And he presumed upon himself the responsibility of going into burn incense within the house of the Lord.
 - ii. The priests withstood him and forcefully rebuked him, telling him that it was not for him to burn incense to the Lord, but that it was solely for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who had been consecrated by the Lord to do such. They ordered him to leave the sanctuary and proclaimed that he would have no honor from the Lord God. **(2 Ch. 26:18)**
 - iii. Uzziah became furious at the priests, but before anything else could be done the Lord struck Uzziah with leprosy on his forehead. And from that day forward, Uzziah never again was permitted to even enter into the temple to even worship the Lord for he remained a leper all his days and was forbidden from entering in to worship the Lord. **(2 Ch. 26:21a)**
4. Though these roles would be separated by the Lord, here we see that Melchizedek was a very unique person in a very unique situation. He served the Most High God as both a king and as a priest.
- a. Again, something that makes me think of a certain someone else, but I'll hold off on any conclusions until later on.
 - b. Let's note a few more descriptors of Melchizedek from our text.
- D. Something that I think is important to note for now is the fact that Melchizedek was a contemporary of Abraham.
1. We're told of some interactions Melchizedek had with Abraham in our opening verses. We'll look at those details later on in our text, but for

now, I just want to note the timeframe in which Melchizedek is said to have lived.

2. He lived during the days of Abraham; technically during the days of Abram for his interactions with Abraham were before Abraham's name was changed from Abram to Abraham.
3. This means that Melchizedek was around long before the sons of Abraham, specifically long before the sons of Jacob, Abraham's great grandsons who would later become the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - a. Why is that important you may wonder? Well, because the Levitical priesthood wasn't established until the days of Moses and after the children of Israel had escaped their slavery in Egypt.
 - b. That means that Melchizedek came over 400 years before there was ever a priesthood amongst the children of Israel.
 - c. As a contemporary of Abraham, Melchizedek and his service as priest to the Most High God **predates the priesthood of the Levites** by over 4 centuries.
 - d. Before Aaron and his sons were ever born, God had established a different order of priesthood; a priesthood that Melchizedek was part of that was completely separate from the Levitical priesthood.
 - e. This is an important piece of information that the author will build upon later on in chapter 7 which we will look to cover next week, Lord willing.
- E. Another interesting piece of information regarding Melchizedek and his priesthood is what the author writes at the very end of verse 3.
 1. The author speaks of how Melchizedek remains a priest continually. Melchizedek's priesthood started well before the Levitical priesthood, and it lasts well beyond the Levitical priesthood.
 2. Jesus came and fulfilled the Law and did away with the Old Testament covenant. He brought in a new covenant. A covenant not based upon the sacrifices of the priests, but one based upon His own sacrifice upon the cross. There was no longer a need for the Levitical priesthood. And this is the point the author will get to in the rest of chapter 7.
 3. For now, I simply want to note that Melchizedek's service as priest to the Most High God continues **well beyond the Levitical priesthood**. It is an eternal priesthood, one God established that would last forever.
- F. One final note I'd like to make from these first three verses has to do with the genealogy of Melchizedek. Verse 3 tells us that Melchizedek was without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life".
 1. Just what exactly the author meant by this is debated by some based upon their interpretation of who they believe Melchizedek to be.
 - a. Some believe that this means Melchizedek was a created being much like the angels who neither marry nor are given in marriage.

- b. Some people think that Melchizedek is some sort of spiritual being who took on flesh; an angel who appeared as a man. Some go as far as to suggest that Melchizedek is God in the flesh.
 - i. Some speculate that he is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in human form.
 - ii. Other suggest that perhaps Melchizedek is Jesus Christ in human form. Something referred to by Biblical scholars as a theophany or Christophany. An Old Testament appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.
- c. Now, this is an interesting possibility. I do believe that the Bible does give us examples of when God appeared in some sort of human form prior to Jesus coming as a babe in a manger.
 - i. I think of the record of Abraham and the Lord walking together and speaking to one another in Genesis 18 when God informed Abraham about His plans for Sodom and Gomorrah and how Abraham interceded on behalf of the people within the city.
 - ii. In Genesis 18 the Lord is seen with two other unidentified men and Abraham got the Lord to agree not to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if there were 10 righteous men within it.
- d. I think of Jacob and him wrestling with a mysterious man who suddenly appeared out of nowhere.
 - i. Jacob would not let the man go and wrestled with him all night long. When the mysterious man requested to be let go, Jacob proclaimed he would not let Him go until He blessed him.
 - ii. It was on that night when the Lord changed Jacob's name from Jacob to Israel. And Jacob called the name of that place Peniel for he proclaimed, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (**Gen. 32:30**)
- e. I think of the book of Daniel and his three friends who were thrown into the furnace for not bowing down and worshipping the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
 - i. The King demanded that when the music played, these three men bow down and worship the golden image, and said if they didn't he would have them thrown into a fiery furnace.
 - ii. But the three men refused the king. They said to him, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king." (**Dan. 3:16-17**)
 - iii. In a fit of rage King Nebuchadnezzar ordered the furnace be heated to seven times the temperature it normally was and had these three men thrown into the fire.
 - iv. And after these men were cast into the fire we read that King Nebuchadnezzar saw something astonishing, he rose in haste

- and asked his counselors, "did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" (**Dan. 3:24**)
 - v. To which his counselors affirmed this to be true. Then King Nebuchadnezzar stated, "Look, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (**Dan. 3:25**)
 - f. I believe all of these are examples of God appearing in human form and interacting with humans upon the earth. Now, does that mean that Melchizedek is God appearing in human form? No, it just means that the Bible does give examples of God revealing Himself in human form prior to Christ's incarnation.
 - g. It's possible that Melchizedek could be a theophany or a Christophany, but we don't want to make assertions when the Bible doesn't clearly state something. Just because it could be, doesn't mean it is.
2. Now, there are some challenges with this interpretation.
 - a. Earlier in this book of Hebrews in chapter 5, the author made it a point of emphasis to speak about how priests were taken among men and appointed for men in things pertaining to God. (**Heb. 5:1**)
 - b. The author built upon this detail showing how Jesus could fit this description seeing as how He was appointed as High Priest as the begotten Son of God and how during his days in the flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications to God. (**Heb. 5:5, 7a**)
 - c. Another thing that stands out is the fact that at the end of verse 3 we are told that Melchizedek was made *like* the Son of God, not that He was the Son of God.
 - d. The words "made like" in the original Greek come from a single interesting word. It is only used this one time in all of the NT. The word means to produce a facsimile of something, to make a copy of something, or to render something similar. Melchizedek served as a model of the Son of God.
 - e. I think we could safely say that Melchizedek is definitely a type or foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, whether or not he was the Lord in the flesh, is a difficult thing to say with certainty.
 3. Some look at this lack of information pertaining to his father, mother, and genealogy as simply stating that there were no known records of his birth, or his parents, or even his death.
 - a. Instead of jumping to the idea that Melchizedek is some sort of eternal being based upon missing details about him, they simply say that this just means there's no known record of these details in the book of Genesis or in any other credible form.
 - b. If Melchizedek was a real human person, which we have no reason to believe he wasn't, then he had to have had a father and a mother.

4. And this is one of the things that brings so much mystery to the identity of Melchizedek. You can look to some Scriptures and be led to believe that perhaps he was some sort of theophany or Christophany. And you can look at other portions of Scripture and come to the conclusion that he was a regular human being who lived as King of Salem during the days of Abraham. Or maybe both, I don't know.
 5. But here is the point I want to make, an application for you and me to take home with us today. **Melchizedek so closely resembles Jesus** that it is difficult to tell them apart.
 - a. And I think that is a great goal to aim for in our lives. As Christians we are called to live as Christ lived His life. We are to follow His teachings; we are to follow the examples He left for us. We are to be like Him; copies of Him, facsimiles of Him to the world around us.
 - b. God desires that we be conformed to the image of His Son. That is what Romans 8:29 clearly states. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son," (**Rom. 8:29a**)
 - c. The goal is Christlikeness; to be more and more like Him with each and every day. Now, we know that ultimately this will happen when Christ returns for us as described in 1 John 3. (**1 Jn. 3:2**)
 - d. But just because the ultimate fulfillment won't come until then, doesn't mean we shouldn't desire to be like Him now. That is why John continues after vs. 2 and declares in vs. 3, "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (**1 Jn. 3:3**)
 6. May our desire be that with each passing day we look and act and portray Christ more and more to the world around us.
- G. Let's look to the rest of our text where the author gives us some more details to some of the things mentioned in verses 1-3 and how they are used to **distinguish Melchizedek** and his priesthood from that of the Levitical priesthood. Read with me verses 4-10.
- IV. Hebrews 7:4-10; The distinction of Melchizedek
- A. Verse 4 opens up with an exhortation to consider the greatness of this man Melchizedek and then shares a few lessons from Melchizedek's past that demonstrate his greatness over the Levitical priesthood.
1. Now, in order for these examples to make sense, we must consider the details surrounding the one place in the Scripture where Melchizedek appears and what exactly transpired.
 2. The details surrounding Melchizedek's appearance in the Scriptures has to do with a war that took place in Canaan between two different groups of kings in the land of Canaan.
 - a. In Genesis 14 we read of a four-king alliance who had been in power over the region and a separate alliance of five kings who rebelled against them.
 - b. When the five kings rebelled, the four kings came down with all their forces and wreaked havoc upon them taking with them captives and spoils along the way.
 - c. The main battle took place just south of the Dead Sea in a place called the Valley of Siddim which happened to be full of asphalt pits; a terrible place to have to do battle.
 - d. Two of the kings from the five-king alliance, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, quickly fled, leaving the other three kings to fight against the stronger alliance of four kings.
 - e. The four kings made swift work of the rest and took with them all the goods of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; all their provisions and a great many of people as well. Included in their haul of the spoils happened to be Abraham's nephew Lot who had been living in the plains just outside of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - f. One individual who escaped the battle came and told Abraham all the details of the situation and how his nephew Lot had been taken by the four-king alliance from the north.
 - g. When Abraham heard the report, he took his 318 servants, armed them for battle and went in pursuit of the kings as far north as Dan.
 - h. He divided his forces into smaller fighting squads and under the cover of night led his men on a surprise attack defeating the four kings and their forces and securing all the goods the kings had amassed from their spoils as well as all the people they had taken captive, including his nephew Lot.
 - i. It was after this amazing rescue mission, while Abraham was on his way back, that he was met by this man Melchizedek in a place called the King's Valley near the Dead Sea.
 - j. We read in Genesis 14, "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies in your hand.' And he [Abraham] gave him [Melchizedek] a tithe of all." (**Gen. 14:18-20**)
 3. The author of Hebrews keys in on two particular details about this interaction that he uses to show how Melchizedek and the order of his priesthood was greater than Abraham and the Levitical priesthood that eventually came through him.
- B. The first thing he keyed in upon was the fact that Abraham gave a tithe of the spoils to Melchizedek.
1. The word tithe simply means a tenth. Of all that Abraham brought back with him, he gave to Melchizedek 10 percent.
 2. But the interesting thing the author of Hebrews states is that Abraham didn't just give to Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils, but a tenth of the

3. In our culture and society today, the ideas of giving and receiving tithes and giving and receiving blessings don't carry the same sort of weight as these things did for the first century Jew.
 4. These were things that were engrained within them their entire lives. Everyone knew and understood the principles involved in tithings and blessings. The greater beings always received offerings from lesser beings and greater beings always passed along blessings to the lesser being. This is just the way things worked back then.
 5. While these may not seem like big deals to us, to the first century Jew these were important pieces of evidence, great clues and indicators of just how great Melchizedek was.
- E. Lord willing, next week, next year, for the first Sunday of the year, we will continue into more of chapter 7 where the author will begin to draw some conclusions based upon these details pertaining to Melchizedek and his priesthood. Conclusions that show the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood and the need for something to replace it. More on that next week.

V. Conclusion

- A. Wrapping things up for today, questions still remain as to who exactly this man Melchizedek was.
1. We know he was a king; a king of peace and righteousness.
 2. We know he was a priest of the Most High God and that his priesthood predates the Levitical priesthood and extends well beyond it into eternity.
 3. But perhaps most applicable to us, we noted how Melchizedek was a facsimile of Jesus; he was made like the Son of God. Was he a theophany, or a Christophany? I don't know for sure. Maybe.
 4. What we do know with certainty is that he points us to Jesus. For Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the true King of Peace, and He is the only perfect King of Righteousness.
 5. He is our Great High Priest who fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law and did away with the need for a Levitical priesthood. He is eternal and His rule and reign will be forever.
 6. Of these things we can be certain of. And I believe that Melchizedek, whether a man, or an angel, or God in the flesh; wouldn't want it any other way. Let's pray.