

The Closer Look Series

The Melchizedek Priesthood

In Israel, royal kingship and priestly authority were completely separate and often less than harmonious. Melchizedek's importance in the Bible is that he was *both* a priest and a king.

Old Testament

Before Jesus was born, Melchizedek is named only twice in the Bible:

■ Genesis 14:18-20. This brief verse tells us two things about Melchizedek: he was king of Salem [later to be Jerusalem] and he was "*priest of the most high God.*" In the Bible, this combination of king and priest in one person is both rare and significant.

■ Psalm 110:4. "*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'*" The entire Psalm is a prophecy of the millennial rule of Israel's Messiah. Jesus applied it to Himself (Matt. 22: 43-45; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42). The Psalm is also applied to Christ in Acts 2:34-35 and Hebrews 1:3; 5:6; 7:17,21; and 10:12,13. This scripture tells us that Melchizedek's order [type or manner] of priesthood [both priest and king] foreshadows the priesthood of the coming Messiah. This was a new concept to Israel, whose law required priests only in Aaron's lineage. (See the Closer Look tract, *The Aaronic Priesthood.*)

New Testament

The book of Hebrews mentions Melchizedek nine times (KJV), explaining that Christ's own priesthood is superior to the law's Aaronic priesthood (Heb. 4:14-7:25). The context

allows no interpretation of a lost Melchizedek priesthood existing in the early Christian church.

■ **Melchizedek's Priesthood is greater than Abraham or the Law.** The Levitical priesthood was an integral part of the Mosaic law. Hebrews 7:11-12 makes this clear: "*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest [Christ] should rise after the order [manner] of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*" The law's Aaronic priesthood was abolished by Christ's own unique priesthood as He made the perfect and final sacrifice. "*And every priest [Aaronic] standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man [Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on [at] the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting [waiting] till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified [being made holy]."* (Heb. 10:11-14, emphasis added.) See also Hebrews 7:18, 8:13, 10:1-10; Romans 10:4; Col. 2:14; Gal. 5:2-4 all referring to Christ's completed work, abolishing the law. Any attempt to return to the law's Aaronic priesthood holds Christ in contempt.

The Heresies of Joseph Smith's Melchizedek Priesthood

■ **Origin of the High Priesthood.** High priesthood in the Bible originated with Aaron at Mt. Sinai under the law of Moses. Melchizedek was never a high priest in the Bible, invalidating that claim in the *Book of Mormon*, D&C and Inspired Version.

■ **Multiple High Priests.** Only one high priest served at a time under the Mosaic law (foreshadowing Christ, our great High Priest). But the *Book of Mormon* refers to many high priests at the same time (Mosiah 7:14; Alma 21:34; Helaman 2:23). Why?

■ **The Lineage of Melchizedek.** Jews kept precise genealogical records to validate eligibility for priesthood. In Hebr. 7:3, the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood was that he had no such genealogy: "*Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*" In God's Word there is no end recorded to his priesthood, and so he is compared to Jesus, whose priesthood also endures forever. Contrast this with Alma 10: 14 which says Melchizedek reigned under his father; and with D&C 83: 2c-g which claims that Melchizedek is one in an unbroken chain of high priests from Adam to Moses. **God never alters His own Word** (see Numbers 23:19).

■ **A Melchizedek Order of Priests.** Every Biblical reference to the Melchizedek priesthood pertains to Jesus Christ's unique role in bringing salvation to mankind. Any attempt by man to appropriate our Savior's unique priesthood or title is a form of blasphemy.

**God does NOT change.
Read Galatians 1:6-9.**

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