

THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

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A Place in the Wilderness

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Scripture quotations are from the
American Standard Version of the Bible (1901)
unless otherwise noted.

Cover: *Abraham Meets Melchizedek*, mosaic
in St. Mark's Basilica, Venice, Italy.



Melchizedek is an extremely mysterious personage, who is mentioned in the Bible in only three places.

In Genesis

He is seen for the only time in Scripture in Genesis,¹ when he came forth to meet Abram, who was returning from the slaughter of the kings.² This brief appearance lasted but three verses. He had not been mentioned before nor was he ever again mentioned in Genesis. There is no record of his father or mother, nor of his birth or death.

Who was he and what was his source? No one can say for sure. We only know that he was a king. He was the king of Salem, which was the precursor to Jerusalem. Being the king of Salem, he was also the king of peace, for that is what Salem means. He was also the king of righteousness, for that is what the name Melchizedek means. We are also told that he was a priest of the Most High God.

¹ Gen. 14:18–20

² Gen. 14:17

In Psalms

The enigmatic Melchizedek is referenced once in Psalms,¹ but only indirectly. There, Jesus is declared to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. We know this is a reference to Jesus, because the first verse of this psalm states, *Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*, and Peter tells us explicitly that this verse refers to Jesus.²

In Hebrews

The final mention of Melchizedek is in the book of Hebrews,³ which was undoubtedly written by the Apostle Paul. There, Paul points out there is no mention of Melchizedek's father or mother, nor of his beginning or end. Rather, in all things he was made to appear like the Son of God. Evidently, according to Paul's understanding, Melchizedek was quite an esteemed person and was a priest different from those of the Levitical order.⁴

1 Psa. 110:4

2 Acts 2:34–36

3 Heb. 5:6–10; 6:20–7:17

4 Heb. 7:11

Melchizedek's Life

Melchizedek, as we have seen, was the King of Salem. The Bible tells us he was also a priest of the Most High God. What was he doing as a priest? Furthermore, how did he know to come out and meet Abram, who was returning from battle? Was there some messenger who reported to Melchizedek, and about whom the Bible is silent? How did Melchizedek know anything at all about Abram or Abram's doings? Not only is Melchizedek mysterious, but his life and activities are as well.

Man's Dominion

To understand what must have been happening at that time, we must turn back to the beginning of the Bible. Recall that God gave man dominion over all the Earth.¹ Since God gave man dominion, God cannot act unilaterally on the Earth. He cannot retract what He has given man. To do so would be unrighteous. We may think that God can do whatever He wants, but that is not the case. He is limited by the dominion He has previously given to man.

¹ Gen. 1:26

Satan's Province

When man fell, he then delivered that dominion to Satan. Satan is now ruling over the Earth through man—through sin in man's flesh¹ and corruption in man's soul.² He influences, deceives, and then leads and misleads man. This is how he maintains his kingdom.

The Situation at Abram's Time

Now let us look at the Earth's situation at the time Abram slaughtered the kings. The whole world was under the control of Satan. Satan himself declared this to the Lord when tempting Him, saying that the kingdoms of the world had been delivered to him.³ The Lord did not dispute Satan's assertion, so we know it must have been true. This means that at Abram's time, the world was under the rule of Satan.

However, we are told⁴ that Abram's slaughter of four kings and their armies with but 318 fighting men was due to God's intervention, for Melchizedek tells us that God delivered all these into Abram's hand. If Satan was the ruler of the Earth, what gave God the right to intervene on Abram's behalf?

¹ Rom. 6:12; 7:17–18

² Gal. 6:8

³ Luke 4:6

⁴ Gen. 14:20

The Created Race

Yet, something much deeper was happening at the time of Melchizedek. God created man with a purpose—to rule for God over the Earth. However, after the fall, man became increasingly corrupt, until the entire Earth was filled with violence.¹ God even repented for having made man.² This forced God to judge man, by destroying the entire race, except for Noah and his family.

The Called Race

The created race had failed God, so God turned to a people He called out for Himself from the created race. The first of these called-out ones was Abram. God appeared to him in Mesopotamia,³ and called him to come forth into the good land.⁴ This was a crucial change that was required for God to carry out His purpose.

However, as we asked concerning the slaughter of the kings, what gave God the right—the authority—to appear to Abram and call him out? Had not God given dominion on the Earth to man, and had not man deliv-

¹ Gen. 6:12–13

² Gen. 6:5–6

³ Acts 7:2

⁴ Gen. 12:1

ered that to Satan? If Satan ruled the Earth, how could God rightly intervene?

The Way

For God to move on the Earth, there must be some who open the door for His intervention by standing for Him on the Earth. It is through the prayer of such men that God is then enabled to move. After all, God gave man dominion. There must be at least one man who stands against the fall and for God, exercising the God-given right to dominion on the Earth. The prayer of such a one is all that is necessary for God to accomplish what He desires in a world that is otherwise controlled by Satan.

For God to change the age from created man to the called race, there was need of a man on the Earth standing for God and opening the way for Him to move through prayer. This was and is a hidden, but glorious, matter.

Melchizedek must have been such a person. He must have been close to God and saw the desire in God's heart. He then prayed out that desire so God could move to accomplish it. Melchizedek must have known God's desire to call out a man to start a new race. From afar, he must have seen Abram, the one whom God desired to call, and *prayed for this call*. This enabled God to appear to Abram.

Throughout Abram's life, Melchizedek must have been behind the scenes praying for him and for God's move. Eventually, Melchizedek must have prayed God to deliver the kings into Abram's hands, which God gladly did.

In prayer, Melchizedek must have seen Abram returning from that slaughter from afar and came forth to feed him. It was such prayer that opened the door for God to move in and with Abram.

Daniel

We see another such person later in the Bible. The prophet Daniel was one who prayed continually to God for Israel, the temple, and Jerusalem.¹ Three times a day he would kneel to pray, giving God thanks and making his petitions and supplications known to God. Even though the world was covered with satanic darkness at Daniel's time, his prayers gave God the means to work on the Earth, in spite of Satan's opposition.²

It was Daniel's prayer that opened the door for God to release the many prophecies concerning Israel's future and the end of this age.³ Furthermore, it was Daniel's prayer that allowed God to once again bring the temple and, eventually, Jerusalem back into exis-

¹ Dan. 6:10

² Dan. 10:13–14

³ Dan. 9:4–27; 10:12

tence.¹ Indeed, the decree to rebuild the temple came at the very end of Daniel's life.²

This was an historic change on Earth and a monumental undertaking. This was certainly *not* something Satan wanted to occur, and as ruler over the Earth, he must have done everything possible to stop it. Yet, God was able to move anyway, because of Daniel's prayers and the prayers of many others at that time, Jeremiah the prophet and Ezra being no doubt among them.

Whenever God moves to change something on Earth, Satan stands in His way in an attempt to frustrate Him. This is especially true for the momentous events in man's history, such as the calling out of Abram and the rebuilding of the temple.

Jesus

Jesus was such a man of prayer as well. He often left His disciples and the multitudes that followed Him to be alone for prayer.³ All that He accomplished while on Earth had His prayer as a foundation. He prayed to choose His apostles⁴ and to send out the seventy.⁵ He uttered the deepest prayer for the accomplishment of

¹ Dan. 9:1–3

² Ezra 1:1–3; Dan. 1:21

³ E.g., Matt. 14:23; Luke 22:32

⁴ Luke 6:12–16

⁵ Luke 10:2

God's heart's desire.¹ He also prayed for God's will before His agony and death.² All He did was first accomplished through His prayer.

Furthermore, He frequently charged his disciples to pray.³ He led them to pray for the gospel,⁴ and instructed them to pray unceasingly⁵ and to be watchful in prayer.⁶ He also warned them about their need to be ready for His second coming through prayer.⁷

Peter

Peter followed the Lord's lead in prayer. When he went up to the housetop around noon for prayer,⁸ he was, no doubt, petitioning God for His move through the gospel and in the church. It was through such prayer that God was enabled to open the door for the gospel to the Gentiles.⁹ For God to move on Earth, there must be prayer to allow that move.

¹ John 17

² Matt. 26:39

³ E.g., Matt. 5:44; 6:6; 9:38; Mark 11:24

⁴ Luke 10:2

⁵ Luke 18:1–7

⁶ Matt. 26:41

⁷ Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36

⁸ Acts 10:9

⁹ Acts 10

The Order

Now, consider that Jesus was made a priest forever after the *order* of Melchizedek.¹ If there was an *order*, then that means there were many priests. Psalms reveals that Melchizedek was not alone in his ministry of prayer. *There was an entire order of priests praying with him for God's move.*

The hearts of these priests were given to and open to God. He in turn poured something of His heart into them. They then prayed, opening the door for God to move according to His heart. What beautiful fellowship.

It was through *their* prayer that Abram was called, that Abram lived in the good land, and that he slaughtered the kings. For such a great endeavor, an order of priests was required.

Incarnation

Before Christ's incarnation, there were also those on Earth praying for the coming of the Messiah. They were touched by God and moved by Him to pray. Their prayer, in turn, enabled God to become a man.

¹ Heb. 5:5–6

Consider Simeon¹ and Anna.² These were praying for the Messiah's coming. How many more must have been praying and thereby allowing God the freedom to move? What a marvelous picture. We do not know how great this group was in number, but it must have been quite large.

For God to change the age again—from the old covenant under the law to the new covenant under grace—required such cooperation from those who loved God.

Pentecost

Look now at Pentecost.³ A great thing was accomplished there—nearly three thousand were added to the disciples at that time.⁴ *This was the beginning of the church.* Using one of the keys Christ had given him, Peter opened the kingdom of the heavens to the Jews.⁵

However, this was preceded by the prayer of 120 believers, who prayed together constantly for many weeks.⁶ This prayer—full of Spirit and power—opened

¹ Luke 2:25–32

² Luke 2:36–37

³ Acts 2:1–40

⁴ Acts 2:41

⁵ Matt. 16:19

⁶ Acts 1:13–15

a path through the evil spirits in the air for God to do such a mighty thing.

Paul

The apostle Paul accomplished amazing things through his ministry. However, his work was founded upon the fasting and prayer of many in Antioch.¹ It was during such prayer that the Holy Spirit instructed those praying to separate Paul and Barnabas for their work among the Gentiles. It was such priestly service, from an “order” of priests, that paved the way for the gospel to spread to Asia Minor, Greece, and even Rome.

The Second Coming

Then, what about now? Once again, God needs to change the age. Christ needs to return to Earth. For this, there must be much prayer. For this, God must again raise up an order of priests, who spend their lives in prayer for Christ's return. As He is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, so must we also be.

¹ Acts 13:1–3

A Holy Priesthood

Peter calls us a holy priesthood.¹ Each one of us should be carrying out our priestly service to God. All Christians should have such a heart, but only some do. Only some will hear the Lord's heart and see His need. Only some will respond.

So, it comes down to this. Do you—the reader of this booklet—see God's need? Will you respond to God's need of prayer? Will you, like Melchizedek and his order, like Simeon and Anna, lay down your life to pray for our dear and wonderful Lord's return? This is what He needs. Will you answer?

Loving the Lord

All Christians love the Lord. It would be a sad Christian, indeed, who did not love Him. But the real question is, how *much* do we love Him? Do we love Him more than our worldly pursuits? Do we love Him more than career and business success, more than monetary gain, more than amusements, games, sports, leisure time, our family, and even our own life?

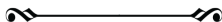
How about our spiritual endeavors? Do we love Him more than these, more than our spiritual ambitions, more than being a pastor, elder, or clergyman?

¹ 1 Pet. 2:5

Do we love the Lord more than what we consider our ministry?

Does our heart yearn for Him—yearn to see Him, to be close to Him, to see His kingdom come to Earth? Is our love for Him so strong that we are willing to lay down everything, pick up the mantle of prayer, and help open the door for His return? This is what our God needs. Do you hear His call?

Know this, that through our prayer for His move on the Earth, not only will the Lord be enabled to return, but we ourselves will be saved!¹



¹ Luke 21:36