

## Hebrews Lesson 9 Articles

Here this remarkable Old Testament event presents an unusual man and an unusual moment. Melchizedek is unique as a king and a priest. These two roles could never be united, probably wise even in our twenty-first century. The stories of impatient King Saul (1 Samuel 13:7–15) and arrogant King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16–21), both of whom tried to ignore the distinction between the roles, are recorded in the Bible as a warning. Yet here is an anticipation of the kingly high priesthood of Jesus Christ, always seen as seated in heaven, a regal position, not standing as a priest offering sacrifice. Perhaps we should see a strange prophetic note in the fact that the only crown ever worn by Jesus was the crown of thorns on his crucifixion day, and the only regal inscription given to him was over his cross.

There is more. Melchizedek's name speaks of righteousness and his title speaks of peace (v. 2). There is accuracy in the reference to 'God Most High' (v. 1), a strong pagan name for the Almighty. This strange priest was not in God's direct line, and yet Salem his home was the origin of Jerusalem. There is so much that is intriguing here. The main theme, however, is the anticipation of Jesus, whose death as the righteous sacrifice would alone bring peace with God (Rom. 5:1). All the Bible references to the relationship between righteousness and peace find their fulfillment in Christ (Ps. 85:10; Isa. 32:17; James 3:17–18).

Stranger and stranger is verse 3, with its emphasis on the sudden appearance and disappearance of Melchizedek. Of course he was a real mortal with a date of birth and a day of death. Yet Scripture does not know of his parentage or credentials or successor. He remains poised as the perennial king-priest, a dim shadow of the one who is truly 'priest for ever'.<sup>1</sup>

Aaron and his sons had to offer daily sacrifices, for themselves first, and then for the people. Christ is sinless; He needs no sacrifices. And the one sacrifice that He offered settled the problem of sin for all eternity. Furthermore, He offered *Himself*, not the blood of bulls and goats, as the sacrifice.

It is easy to see, then, that the order of Melchizedek is superior to the order of Aaron. This point has been proved historically, for Abraham honored Melchizedek above Levi; it has been proved doctrinally, for Ps. 110:4 definitely states that God created a new order of priesthood in the Law; and it has been proved practically, for no man could ever qualify to be High Priest except Jesus Christ. There is no need for us to look beyond Christ—He is all that we need.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hacking, P. H. (2006). *Opening up Hebrews*. Opening Up Commentary (43–44). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (696). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.