
Who is Melchizedek?

by: Ronald L. Dart

"The king of Sodom went out to meet Abraham after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer (Kedorlaomer), and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh" (Genesis 14:17).

This is before the destruction of Sodom. They had taken captives out of Sodom, including Lot and his family. Abraham, put all of his men together, went out, fought, rescued them, and took all the goods and booty of Sodom and Gomorrah and was bringing them back.

We are told in verse 17 that "The king of Sodom, came out to meet him, but another personage also came to meet him," a person that I believe would not be in Sodom. It says in verse 18, "Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine. He was the priest of the Most High God, {19} And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, {20} And blessed be the Most High God, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he (Abraham) gave him (Melchizedek) tithes of all."

This simple little instance is taking place here where Abraham is coming back from the slaughter with, who knows, perhaps a million dollars' worth of booty. And here comes a priest out to Abraham and he carves out 10% of it, even before he gives it back to the King of Sodom what was his. So, Abraham gives 10% of all that to Melchizedek. This is a very significant act.

Hebrews chapter 7 verse one, "This Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and he blessed him, {2} To whom Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace, {3} Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end-of-life, but made like the Son of God, abides a priest continually."

What kind of personage could this possibly be? What does it mean when you say that someone is without father, without mother, without descent? Some might argue that what this means is that there is no "genealogy for this man." This goes on to say, "He has not beginning of days, nor end-of-life." Now how many individuals, beings, could there possibly be in the universe, who have neither beginning of days, nor end-of-life? What's another word for someone who has no beginning of days, nor end-of-life? Eternal.

Who is eternal? Well that's what the name YHVH, or Yahweh, or Jehovah means. It means "the eternal, ever living one." The one without beginning of days, nor end-of-life. This Melchizedek that came and met Abraham and accepted tithes from him, was God, was the eternal, was the YHVH, Yehovah. The one that we meet again and again throughout the pages of the Old Testament. The one whom we called God and who we may have assumed was the Father of Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews said, "He is without father, without mother, He abides a priest perpetually, {4} Now consider how great this man was, unto even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils."

Now you have to realize that the tithe, and many people don't, really realize, that the tithe is an act of worship. It was something with one who is a lesser person did to one who was greater and acknowledging the greatness of this other person, the supremacy, or the power of the other. And so Abraham, who was a Hebrew, was considered the greatest man in Hebrew history. He was the father of the faithful (Galatians 3:9).

He said, "I want you to understand, how great Melchizedek was because even Abraham paid tithes, acknowledging the greatness of this one Melchizedek." Who is this person?

He says, {5} "Verily they that are the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, even though they come out of the loins of Abraham. {6} But He whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises. {7} And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better."

Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Which was the greater? Which was the less? Abraham was the less.

Now He is writing to people who have a fixation on the Temple, and upon Levi, and who think that the Levitical priesthood was the pinnacle of the service of God.

Here he said, {8} "Men who die received tithes. There he received them, of whom it is witnessed he is alive. {9} And so I may say, Levi who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, {10} For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him."

He is establishing through this, the greatness of the Melchizedek priesthood, that it is greater than Abraham, and consequently it is greater than Levi, who was out of the loins of Abraham and would have to look up to and back to Abraham.

He then goes on to say, {11} "If then perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? {12} For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law."

What law? Any law that had anything to do with the priesthood, including the law of tithing, which existed before Levi, existed after Levi, that Abraham paid tithes. Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek because Levi was in the loins of Abraham, figuratively speaking.

And so, it is, that the one who receives tithes then, can receive tithes now. Who was that person? He is the one who is without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end-of-life, the one we know as Jesus Christ.

Verse 13, "For he of whom these things are spoken," to make the point as to who he is really talking about, "pertains to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar. {14} For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood, {15} And yet he was established as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and in fact, is none other than Melchizedek."

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you find Melchizedek interesting?
2. Do you agree that "tithe is an act of worship?"
3. Do you believe that the law actually existed before Mt. Sinai?
4. What do you think the "order of Melchizedek" means?