

“Melchizedek, Like the Son”

Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus, Our High Priest

Hebrews 7:1-10

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Jeff: Our heavenly Father, we are very thankful, thankful for the time that You’ve given to us, and thankful for life and breath itself, thankful for the things that we really give no recognition to throughout our daily lives, but take for granted day by day, moment by moment. Thank You for those things for which we do set our minds upon. And thank You for those things that often take up our day-to-day lives—our families, our friends. Thank You for our occupations. Thank You for the things that You place in our lives that are blessings and benefits.

But most of all we thank You today for the Lord Jesus Christ, for were it not for Him, we would not have a place to stand. We would not have the righteousness to stand before You. We would not have the assurance and the safety and the security to call You our Father, and to know that we belong in Your family.

Father, as we gather together today, as we study Your word once again, we’re mindful of these blessings and benefits. But we’re mindful most of all of Christ. And as we study chapter 7 today in the book of Hebrews, we are mindful of the fact that there is much to the Lord Jesus Christ, much to Him that we have yet to understand. And yet there is a simplicity without being simplistic about the Lord Jesus that even a child can understand and embrace, and know the salvation that He came to bring. And yet that’s not what we’re thinking about today. We’re thinking about a more complex argument, a more detailed description of the Lord Jesus, and why it is that we should remain faithful.

And so, Father, we pray and ask that as we study today that You would open our minds, that You’ll bless us, not only in our hearts but in our thinking. And we pray that as we do that, Your word, which is a living word, would take hold of us and have its way with us, because it is the Spirit who causes it to live. And Lord, we pray and ask that You would indeed bless us through it, for we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: Well, why don’t we turn this morning to Hebrews chapter 7? And this morning we’ll be looking at verses 1-10. Don, do you have it?

Don: Yes.

Jeff: Why don’t you read 1-10 nice and loud for us?

Don: Okay. *“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.*

“See how great this man was, to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils. And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the Law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers,

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though these are also descended from Abraham. But this man, who does not have his descent from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case, tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: Okay. Well, today we are going to look together at this outline. I have some introductory things that I want to say, at least to set the stage. I then want to look at *Biblical evidence*, and I'll tell you about what when we get there. I want to look at *a comparison*. The comparison will be between Christ and Melchizedek. And then I want to notice *the conclusion*, that indeed Melchizedek is greater than Abraham, or Abram in this particular text.

Now I want to say this at the outset. I think that we need to put on our thinking caps today. I think that it's imperative that we do that. I think that the author to the Hebrews is going to tell us that we need to do that. So I'm just going to forewarn you that this is one of those texts where we need to be engaged this morning. And at 6:30 that's not always easy. So be engaged, and let's think about some introductory things.

What is this text about? Well, let me illustrate it before I actually tell you. I was serving in another city. And I was relaxing at home one evening and received a call. And the man on the other end now—and I can't exactly remember now what he wanted me to do or wanted from me that night!—but I remember part of the conversation very vividly.

The man basically told me that he had been attending a large church in a small city that I pastored in for quite some time. However, for the last year he had been attending a small Wesleyan congregation.

Now it was not like the Wesleyan congregations that I think we see today that are more contemporary, with all of the accoutrements as far as the things that they tell you to do about your hair and about your clothing, and all that. You don't see that today. But this was an old traditional Wesleyan church, where your hair had to be a certain length and your shirts had to be a certain type. And if you were a gal you had to wear dresses, and so on.

And he told me that he was attending this church for the year. And I said, “Well, that's quite a shock to me, that you would attend this particular church, and then for a year that you would attend this other one.” I said, “What's the purpose? What's the reason?”

And he said, “Well, my purpose is to become holy.”

I said, “Oh, so by attending this church for a year you're going to learn holiness.”

And he said, “Yes, that's the idea.”

Now I thought to myself, *That's awfully interesting to think that you can learn holiness in one year. (Laughter)* Wouldn't that be nice! I would like to do that myself. I always thought that was a lifelong process. But not only did I think that it was a lifelong process, but I never associated length of hair and types of shirts, and so on, with holiness.

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So his conception of an external outward conformity to a church tradition was a little bit different than my conception of what actual growth in grace—holiness—is, or was at the time I was talking to him, and continues to be.

Now why do I bring this up? Well I bring this up because I want to remind you of where we are in the book of Hebrews, and how this example fits into the flow of what we’ve been looking at.

I realize there are some challenges. You know, this is always the challenge when you’re thinking about preaching through a book. For instance, how long does it take to sit down and read through the book of Romans. It may take an hour or an hour-and-a-half, you know. And how long does a preacher usually preach through a book like Romans? Well, maybe an entire year or two years. If you’re Martyn Lloyd-Jones, maybe 14 years. *(Laughter)* Let’s give thanks. And yet this letter, which could be read in this short period of time, is strung out over this long period of time. Well, we’ve been looking at Hebrews now for a long period of time with some intermittent gaps in between. And so I recognize the challenge of trying to recommend the flow of the book to you. Nonetheless, I’m going to try that.

If you go back to chapter 5 for a minute and you look at verse 10, he mentions Melchizedek in that portion of Scripture, and we’ve already been through it. But it’s at this point that the Preacher stops. He stops, he pauses, and then what does he say? He says this in verse 11. He says, “*About this*”,--that is, about Melchizedek,-- “*we have much to say,*” and it’s hard to explain.

Now when you think about that alone,--it’s hard to explain,--well, what is he talking about? Well one could get the idea that he’s talking about the substance of it all. The content is hard to explain. The idea of “hard to explain” is called a *hapax logomena*, which means that it only occurs once in the New Testament. That word that is translated “*hard to explain*” only occurs once in the New Testament.

And what does it mean? Well, it’s used in extra-Biblical literature. For instance, Phyllo uses it in talking about the difficulty that one has in interpreting a dream. It’s hard to explain. And so we might think to ourselves that the content of Melchizedek is hard to explain.

And I think that he’s right to some extent. I think that it’s a challenge for us to understand what the comparison between Melchizedek and Jesus actually is and what it’s pointing to.

But it’s not just that. You know what else he goes on to say. He says that it’s not only hard to explain. But you’ve become “*dull of hearing.*”

Now remember. We talked about this some. And the author of Hebrews has been reminding us of this ever since the beginning of the book. Remember what he said in chapter 2. In chapter 2 he said, “Don’t drift.” You remember that. You’re in a boat. You’re fixing your eyes on a certain point on land so that you can guide the boat safely into the harbor. He says that when you drift, that’s when you take your eyes off the point. Then you begin to go into angles and maybe even damage the boat. He says, “Don’t drift.” And he says that a number of times.

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And then we got into that section where we looked at drifting away from the faith, and the potential that’s there for that, for any one of us to do. And he says, “Look! I’ve got a lot to say about Melchizedek and how he compares to Jesus. But not only is the content hard; you’re dull of hearing. You’re not listening. There’s an attitudinal problem that has crept in that makes it virtually impossible for me to communicate what I need to communicate to you about Jesus Christ, using Melchizedek to do it.” And so the content is not only difficult, but the problem is with the audience at this point.

Now what is he talking about? Well, he’s talking about *maturity* at this point. He’s talking about growth in grace. And I would say to you that this is the fundamental difference that I would have between the man who called me that evening and what we find here in the book of Hebrews. The man who called me that evening was really looking for an easy holiness. I’m going to button up my shirt all the way. I’m going to make sure that my hair doesn’t touch the collar of it. I’m going to make sure that my sleeves are just the right length. I’m going to give my children the finger test, which is not a bad idea to do. Anyway, I digress. (*Laughter*) And things like that—all things that you may attribute to wisdom at some level, right? I mean, nobody in their right mind is going to let their daughter go out of the house with a certain length of dress. I’m not talking about modesty at this point.

But what I’m talking about is that I’m talking about arguing that if I dress a certain way, or if I have my hair a certain length, that I must be, *de facto*, holy.

And you see what the author of Hebrews is saying. The author of Hebrews is saying, no, it’s not that at all. You see, there’s a certain level of understanding in the Christian faith which constitutes holiness. But you’ve all met the person who says, “I know. I know these things. I must be holy, right, because I know them,” and has an attitude that is absolutely atrocious, that is akin to pride. You know, that sort of thing.

And so it’s not just “I know.” But what the author of Hebrews is saying is that I must know. My maturity means attaining a certain level of knowledge. But it also means that I have a certain heart attentiveness, a mindfulness toward the things that I know. For instance, I may be able to tell you all that I know about prayer. But maybe I don’t pray. And you know how that goes. You know, if a person can tell; you all about prayer, but they themselves don’t do prayer, don’t engage in prayer, then that’s the very dichotomy that the author of Hebrews is talking about.

So look! What we’re looking at here this morning is a difficult topic that’s hard to explain—Jesus and Melchizedek, and how it is that they interrelate. Why is it that we ought to see them as interrelated? But it’s not just that. Our hearts have to be into this.

Now I want to tell you what you’re tempted to do. There’s a temptation on either side of this. The temptation on either side of this is one that we’ve already expressed. The temptation on the one side is to say, “Yes, please explain that; I want to hear this.”

Transcriber’s Note: Said in an affected, superior tone of voice.

Jeff: Right? You know, that intellectualism. And then the temptation on the other side is to say, “I don’t need to learn this!” (*Laughter*) “All I need is Jesus! And I need the power of the Spirit. Why do I need to know about this?” You see, there’s a temptation on either side that brings our maturity to shipwreck if we’re not careful. You see?

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So we’re talking about maturity. And I would say this to you. This is a part of maturity. And it’s a part of maturity not because I say it’s a part of maturity. It’s a part of maturity because the author of Hebrews says that this is a matter of maturity.

I love it when I can tell you that the dispute is with Scripture, not with me. You know what I mean? (*Laughter*) Take it up with the Preacher. So it’s content and attitude. Well, before we go on to some other things, any questions or comments before we engage? Bill?

Bill: I hope this is working.

Transcriber’s Note: Referring to the microphone.

Bill: Is this why Paul says that it is his desire to present every man mature in Christ?

Jeff: “It’s my desire to present every man mature in Christ.” Yes, I believe that is what he’s saying. And it connects with something else that I think is vitally important, something that I’ve mentioned to you before, but always bears mentioning again. And that is this idea of the twofold grace of God. In other words, when we are saved, we receive what John Calvin called the *duplex gratia Dei*, the twofold grace of God. And he said that you don’t possess one aspect of the twofold grace without possessing the other. And he said this. Remember that the twofold aspect is *forensic benefits*—that is, justification, things like adoption. But then there’s the *renovative* aspect of our redemption. And that consists of things like sanctification, growth and grace in maturity, what we’re talking about now.

So what we can say is this. Paul’s desire is not just to see men mature. But if we can take him in terms of his whole corpus of writing, his desire is to see men both justified and renovated, because those are the benefits summarized that every believer possesses in Jesus Christ. There’s no such thing as the believer who says, “I’m justified. I just haven’t received the second blessing of sanctification yet.” You know what I’m saying. No such thing in Paul’s understanding of it. Okay? Yes?

Participant: When you mentioned here about “*Of this we have much to say*,” do you think that the speaker gets to the point where he’s talking about Melchizedek, and he realizes that this is complex. I don’t know if I can go any further without explaining some other things, as opposed to referring to the whole first five chapters?

Jeff: Well, I think he’s come to the place about Melchizedek. And he stops there, and there’s that long hiatus of talking about dullness of hearing, and then talking about certain figures that may have committed apostasy, and so on. And so I think that the introduction about Melchizedek is what prompted him to talk about the other.

You know what? That clock is broken, and I did not realize that.

Participant: That was one of those bad—

Jeff: This is great! I have all the time in the world, and it never seems to move anywhere! (*Laughter*) All right; let’s move on. (*Laughter*) So I’m going to speed up just a little bit. (*Laughter*) We’ve dealt with some drift. And so now let’s talk about some content.

Who is Melchizedek? Well, this is an Old Testament figure. I need to tell you that I’m going to fit a couple of things in that I think are important. We’ve dealt with them before we used them all the time.

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The first thing that we need to understand is that when we look at Scripture and ask this question, that this is, first of all, a systematic theological question. A systematic theology question is what does the Bible say about x? In this case, what does the Bible say about Melchizedek? It’s a systematic theological question.

The second thing I want you to notice is this. When you deal with systematic theological questions, you deal with what’s called *the analogy of Scripture*. In other words, you ask, “What does all of Scripture say about x?” What does all of Scripture say about Melchizedek in this case?

Now I want you to think about this for a minute. That’s right for us to do. We could talk about this for quite a while, because it’s an important matter. But let me just simply say this. We can do this with a book that has multiple authors over a wide historical time period. We can do this because this Bible, we believe, has one main author, the Holy Spirit. This is a Holy Spirit-inspired book. So I can’t interpret what Isaiah 53 says without reaching ahead and asking, “What does Acts 13 say about it?” You see, that’s the idea then. So all of this Scripture is mainly from God, who has ancillary authors.

And so then, what does the Bible say about Melchizedek? Well, surprisingly, there are very few references to Melchizedek. We find in Genesis chapter 14 that there is this mention of Abram coming back from defeating the kings. And Melchizedek brings out bread and wine and he blesses Abraham. And then Melchizedek receives a tithe from Abram.

Now let me just simply say at this point that there’s not much more than this. It’s a very simple story. Psalm 110 doesn’t actually talk about Melchizedek as a person. It talks about his office, his priestly office.

Transcriber’s Note: Psalm 110:4, ESV.

“The LORD has sworn, and will not change His mind:

‘You are a Priest forever,

After the order of Melchizedek.’”

Jeff: So not much there. And then the book of Hebrews—eight instances, eight mentions of Melchizedek, eight mentions.

Now when you think about that, there’s not much there, right? What does the Bible say about Melchizedek. Well, not a whole lot. In fact, mainly Genesis 14 and the book of Hebrews.

Now I want to mention one thing before I ask this question about how this helps our holiness. I sort of debate whether or not to put this in there, but I’m going to do it anyway, because I think it’s important.

When we interpret Scripture, one of the principles we use has historical trustworthiness to it. For years and years and years, hundreds and thousands of years, it’s been used by the church. It’s called *good and necessary consequence*. In other words, when we do systematic theology, gathering up all the evidence of Scripture, we have to ask ourselves, “Well, what does this mean?”

So let me give you an example of this. And I’ll use something that comes from Genesis 14—the bread and the wine.

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Transcriber’s Note: Genesis 14:18, NKJV. “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.”

Jeff: The bread and the wine, some people have said, is a proto-Communion service. Ahhhh! You know, and we say, “Now that’s pretty interesting, pretty slick!”

Now let’s apply good and necessary consequence. Is that a good consequence of Scripture? In other words, could it be the interpretation of Scripture? And the answer to that has to be yes. It could be that the bread and wine by this Christ-type figure, being brought out to Abraham, is a proto-typical Communion service. It could be. So that’s a good consequence drawn from, deduced from Scripture.

The question that you have to ask yourself, then, is this. Is it a necessary consequence? In other words, is it required that I believe that the bread and the wine are a proto-Communion service? And the answer to that has to be no. It could be nothing more than a *merism*.

Now what is a merism? A merism is a part expressed for the whole. In other words, if I go out with you one night, if we go out and I come home and my wife says, “What did you have for dinner?”

I say, “Meat and potatoes.” You know that I’m not telling her about the broccoli that was on the side that I may have eaten as well. I’m telling her about the main things, the meat and the potatoes—the merism, the part expressed for the whole.

So it could just be that the bread and the wine is a merism. It’s not a necessary consequence that I understand this as a proto-Communion service.

Now the analogy of Scripture and good and necessary consequence are important when we begin to ask the question who is Melchizedek? But before we get to that in the next section, let me just say this as well. Why is this important for our holiness? Well, that leads to the next thing. It’s *the comparison*.

What you have to understand here is that what we are dealing with is not an identity. In other words, Melchizedek is not Jesus Christ. We are dealing with a comparison, an analogy. In other words, there’s an analogy between Jesus and Melchizedek.

Now I say that, and let me just apply this really quickly. That’s an application of good and necessary consequence.

There are people out there who will say that Melchizedek is a pre-incarnate form of Jesus. That is a good inference from Scripture. But there is no necessary inference for that being the case. In other words, Scripture doesn’t require that. So we are dealing with a comparison or an analogy between Melchizedek and Christ.

Now let’s just talk about some things so that we can build the argument and find out why this is important for holiness. And our clock here on the wall is disappointing to us, so let’s just kind of—Everybody up? Good; glad to hear it.

All right. Hebrews chapter 7, verse 3. We are told what? That He “was made like the Son of God.” Now the idea here is a divine passive. In other words, the tense of the verb means that it was God who made him like Him. In other words, the question that we have to ask ourselves is *how*? How did God make Melchizedek like the Son of God?

Now I’m going to answer that. But I want to talk to you quickly about something else: *typology*. What is a *type*? Well a type, in terms of what the word actually means, is when

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you have a piece of metal and you have something like a mold. And you put it down on the metal and then you stamp it. And then on that piece of metal you have a type of what was here in the mold. So that's the type. In other words, Melchizedek continues to be a type of priest forever.

Now I want you to think about that for a minute. How is it that God makes Melchizedek like the Son of Man? By typology. The priesthood is typical. In other words, the reality of what the Melchizedekian priesthood is supposed to express comes to fruition and fulfillment in Christ.

Let's talk about *the theology* for a minute. So when we think about the grammar, it is God who makes the type. It is God who makes this type, so that Melchizedek can be like the Son of God, pre-figuring Him.

Now in what sense does He make him like Christ? The answer is *eternally*. In other words, there is an eternal priesthood of which Christ is a part—the Melchizedekian priesthood.

How is it that Melchizedek expresses typologically that eternity? And the answer is that he expresses *literary* eternity, as opposed to an *ontological* eternity.

What do I mean by that? Well, I mean this. Let me just express it like this. He doesn't have a mother or father. He doesn't have a genealogy, right? He's like the Son of God in that his priesthood appears eternal.

Now what is Scripture saying? Scripture isn't saying that Melchizedek did not have a mother or father. He's not saying that Melchizedek did not have a genealogy. What Scripture is saying is this. What the author of Hebrews is saying is that I'm going to take advantage of the fact that Melchizedek is not recorded as having parents. He is not Melchizedek ben Anyone. Nor is it recorded that he has a genealogy. So he is taking the literary advantage here of saying, “Let me use Melchizedek and show you that he is a type of Jesus Christ in this sense: that his priesthood is eternal.”

Now this literary eternity that I just expressed, that I just told you about, is over against the ontological eternity of Jesus Christ and His priesthood. In other words, He is eternal—not just literarily, but He *is* eternal. And because He *is* eternal, and He is the fulfillment of the covenant, He is perpetually a priest on our behalf. Okay?

There's complexity here, but let me just say this. If you've understood what I've said thus far, great! I'm just going to say this. There's complexity here. And you know, I'm going to leave it, just because of time. And I'm going to drive to the point now. If you want to ask about the complexity, do that afterward.

Melchizedek is greater than Abram. Here is the argument. The argument is that Melchizedek is greater than Abram, and Levi is from Abram. If the type is greater than Abram, if Melchizedek as the type is greater than Abram, then how much more, how much greater, is the fulfillment of the type greater than Abram?

Now you already understand what he's driving at, right? Because what he's saying is, if Abram is lesser than Melchizedek, that means that the Levitical priesthood that you want to return to is lesser than Melchizedek. But if Melchizedek was only the type, then how much greater is Jesus Christ than Melchizedek! And how much less is Abram and

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Leviticus, less than Jesus. And the point is this. Why then do you want to go back to the temple? Why do you want to go back to the temple?

This is what he could say. He could say this. He could say, Look. If you go back to the temple, every time that a priest that you love dies, that’s a testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ who is eternal, an eternal Priest, is greater than this whole Levitical system. You see, that’s the point of Melchizedek in comparison to Jesus. Melchizedek is the type. He’s a literary type. He expresses a literary eternity which points to the greater eternity of Jesus Christ, who is an eternal High Priest on our behalf, who is greater than anything of Abram, anything Levitical, anything of the temple.

And that ought to drive holiness, right? You see how it is then that Christ drives our desire to be with Christ.

I’ll tell you what. Rather than going into this further, let’s just see if you have anything that you want to wrestle through. We’ve got a couple of minutes here. I can take you through this last point. I’ve really expressed it. But let’s see if—

Participant: I think it would be helpful if you would explain in what way he is a literary type. This is very good.

Jeff: Yes. So look at this again. I’ll show you this. Go to Hebrews 7. It says of Melchizedek that “*he is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. But resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.*”

Now if you go back and look at Genesis 14, or even Psalm 110, you can eliminate Psalm 110, because Psalm 110 doesn’t say anything about the person of Melchizedek. So all of our information about Melchizedek comes from Genesis chapter 14.

But what do we know about Melchizedek from Genesis 14? Well, we know that he gave bread and wine. We know that he blessed Abram. We know that he received the tithe from Abram. That’s all we know literarily. In other words, what’s recorded about him is nothing about him being the son of anyone—you know, Melchizedek, son of. There’s nothing recorded about his father or mother. There’s nothing recorded about who his ancestors are. We don’t know if he’s related to Shem, Ham or Japheth. We have no idea what his genealogy is.

And so the author of Hebrews uses that to say in terms of what is revealed about him in the literature, he appears like an eternal figure, not having father or mother or genealogy. His death is not even recorded. He appears on the scene, and he seems to just stay there.

And so as a literary figure he possesses eternity. And the author of Hebrews uses that to compare it with the ontological eternity of Jesus Christ. *Ontology* means *being*. In other words, in His very being He is eternal, and not just as a literary figure. Does that make sense? Okay.

I want to say this to you really quickly while you’re getting the mike back there. The text also goes on to prove the point, or to substantiate the point about how the fulfillment is greater than the Levitical system, because remember what he says. He says that Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek, who was a type of Christ. And Melchizedek blessed Abram. And the greater always blesses the less great, right? And so again he’s just driving home that the type is greater than Abram and so Levi, because Levi is in the loins of Abram.

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And so if the type is greater, than the antitype or the fulfillment of the type, Jesus Christ Himself, is certainly greater than all of this.

Participant: Yes. One other thing about what has been observed here is that neither Melchizedek nor Jesus are in the line of Levi. And one of the arguments in Hebrews is that Jesus is so much greater than the old system. And the author is pointing out that Jesus is not part of the Levitical economy. His priesthood is entirely different than that.

Jeff: Yes. He’s going to actually say that in the next chapter.

Participant: Well, I’m straining ahead. *(Laughter)*

Second Participant: Maybe I could share an example.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: In the New Testament, as far as maturity goes, there are Christians who say that Jesus Christ’s resurrected body can go through walls. But the Scripture never says that.

Jeff: Right.

Participant: He appeared when doors were locked. But it doesn’t say that His resurrected body went through walls or locked doors. People read into it what is not there.

Jeff: Yes, right.

Participant: It’s possible, but not necessary.

Jeff: Yes, that’s right. It’s a good inference, not a necessary one.

Participant: I think I’m going to push back a little bit more, because you make much of an eternal point. But it’s very much of a prophetic point and an eschatological point when you look at what He meant to fulfill in His priesthood. With the gentleman over here who had made mention of the difference between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek, we know that the Levitical priests were not allowed to become kings. So that’s just one of the reasons why the fulfillment came from the line of Judah, obviously to fulfill the Melchizedek priesthood. But I think this is establishing the question of His eternal office. I think it points to His earthly office of the Messiah, because if you read at the beginning of chapter 6, they’re supposed to go past all of this elementary teaching that they heard.

Jeff: Right.

Participant: Not laying the foundation of judgment, and so on and so forth. So even the reference in chapter 5, that we have much to explain about Melchizedek, is essentially saying that we have much to explain about the Person of Christ—what He had represented much more—His body, than His eternal office. So moving on to chapter 7, obviously, it says what? That He lives forever to make intercession. So if we would have a concept now of what that looks like, from an eternal standpoint of Him being High Priest, of Christ being High Priest, forever making intercession, we have to understand that He was just as qualified on earth. So His earthly office is something that fulfills much more than we could even begin to kind of wrap our heads around. We could be on the precipice of maybe understanding what He had accomplished in His earthly office in His body.

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But ultimately, this kind of point here, this hearkening back to the picture or the shadow of Melchizedek, has a point here to understanding why Christ came, in the way and the fashion that He came. It was to fulfill much more than an eternal office. That’s essentially what I’m saying. And so this is the main reason of why He came from the Melchizedek priesthood, essentially because it was to judge and to be priest of the nations.

So we see David with the ephod on, right? And he was allowed. Now Saul tried to do that and Saul was penalized for it. But David represented this idea of priest, king and prophet. So in the same way we see the sense of what he sought to accomplish and what He came to accomplish in His earthly office. So here are a lot of things going on that point to Him being justified, Him being glorified for His earthly position, which points a little bit to Melchizedek.

Jeff: Well, I think that’s the whole point of the first ten verses of chapter 5, where he talks about Him being an earthly Priest. And then he raises the idea of Melchizedek. “You’re dull of hearing; it’s hard to explain. You’re not at a place of maturity to be able to understand that.” So then he goes and has that long digression about their immaturity. And then he brings us back around to really begin with what he started in chapter 5, which is the earthly priesthood and how Jesus is like an earthly priest. But he actually takes us beyond that with verses 10 and 11 with Melchizedek. And so I don’t see that as a pushback. I think that sort of fits in the over-all context of the message of Hebrews.

Participant: How do you feel eschatologically, though, as it says that the Levitical priesthood will still be established?

Jeff: Well, I think that the Levitical priesthood has passed away with the destruction of the temple. And I think that the eternal priesthood is the Melchizedekian priesthood, which he’s going to argue for in the next chapter. So the idea then is, and this may be a difference in our eschatology. I don’t see a rebuilding of the temple. I see the temple having been rebuilt in the people of God. I don’t see a re-establishment of the Levitical priesthood and the whole sacrificial order. I don’t buy into that whole interpretation of the book of Revelation and eschatology. So that may be a difference in what we’re looking at here. I think the eternal priesthood is the Melchizedekian, which is what Jesus fulfills. That may be an eschatological difference we have. Yes, Brian?

Brian: Our time is up. But I just wanted to ask. I was always taught that this Melchizedek was what I think they called a theophany, that is, Christ manifested in human form. Is that legitimate? Not legitimate?

Participant: It says that he’s like, not the same.

Jeff: Yes. You see, that’s the kind of thing that I would disagree with. I know there are people who say that.

I had a debate with somebody about it a couple of years ago over this topic. I don’t know if you can Google it or not. But the debate is on the Internet. The other guy took the position that Melchizedek is the pre-incarnate Christ.

And here’s what I think. I actually think that—and you know, the funny thing about it is—,oh well, forget it! (*Laughter*) Let me just say this. I won the debate. I expected

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laughter for that, but anyway, I’ll just press on. (*Laughter*) I think that the way to answer this question is through systematic theology.

This is the problem with just sticking with an exegetical or a Biblical theology and saying, “This is as far as we can go.” Then what happens is that you end up with texts where one text seems to say this, and another text seems to say this. And you never get to the point of the systematic aspect of reconciling all the material and saying, “What does it all teach?” And I think the systematic question really reconciles the material in Scripture and says that this is what it teaches.

So, for instance, my opponent would have said, “Well, look. He’s mentioned as the king of peace and the king of righteousness.” Well, I think all that is that when in Hebrews chapter 1, basically in Psalm 45 the Messiah is described as both somebody who loves peace and righteousness. And I think that the idea is that he’s pulling out what’s available in Genesis 14 and applying it to the fulfillment of the type. Again, it may be a good inference, but it’s certainly not a necessary one where we have to call Melchizedek the pre-incarnate Christ. I think that it goes back to that good and necessary consequence.

It may be good. And that’s what my opponent kept coming back to. “It’s good.” But it’s not necessary.

Participant: A simple point, Jeff, in Hebrews 7:3.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: Why does the author suggest that the Son of God had no father or mother?

Jeff: Well, I don’t think he’s suggesting that. But “*resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.*” I think that’s the point of comparison. “*Resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.*” See, that’s exactly the complexity that I was going to mention earlier. The complexity I was going to mention is that if you say there’s an identity here, then it falls down, because Melchizedek literally doesn’t have a father or mother. But Jesus has a Father eternally, and a mother in terms of His incarnation, and even an adopted father. So the complexity enters into it. If you press this cap through the strainer too far, then what happens is that it all unravels. Once you begin to say that this is an identity, it just unravels at that point. So you really hit on the complexity of it. So let’s pray.

Participant: Real quick. Was Melchizedek the king of Jerusalem or Salem?

Jeff: He seems to be that.

Participant: And how old would Abraham have been at this time, before the birth of Isaac? Any idea?

Jeff: I don’t remember that. Does anyone else remember how old he might have been? I’m not sure.

Participant: Greater than 75.

Jeff: Yes. (*Laughter*)

Participant: And less than 90.

Jeff: And less than 90, yes. All right, let’s pray. Father in heaven, thank You for the day and the time You’ve given. Bless us now, we pray, throughout the rest of our day,

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keeping our minds attentive to You. Lord, help us to not drift, but help us to focus on He who is greater. And Lord, help us to find our rest in Him, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Men: Amen. (*Applause*)