

## Hebrews 7:1-10

As promised, we have finally returned to *Melchizedek*, whom we first heard of in [Ch. 5](#). And I for one really enjoy this kind of stuff. And I enjoy it in a different kind of way than I do the prophets or [Revelation](#). Those books are filled with all kinds of imagery which were casting a shadow of significant things to come. And truthfully there have been some poor interpretations of some of those truths, because without grasping the rest of what the bible has to say, and having a systematic theology, it can just get weird by some who try to interpret it. And there are also those parts we simply were told we would not be able to understand until the right time ([Dan. 12:4 & 8-9](#), [Hab. 2:3](#), [Matt. 24:36](#), [Rev. 22:10](#)).

- But when we come to books like [Romans](#) and [Hebrews](#), we end up getting so much information that fills in the gaps of understanding that we can see how God has fulfilled prophecy and continues to do so.
- For these Jewish Christians (meaning they had already received Jesus), they most certainly had no understanding of what the author was telling them here. **That is until he told them.**
- And one massive piece for them was how Jesus could be a priest (much less the high priest) **and king** (something we have touched on and will cover again lightly today). And this problem for them existed because they were so engrained in the Law and sacrificial system yet did not understand how those pieces of their history (along with others) were actually given by God to point them to what was coming. A big portion of which happened when Jesus came the first time. And another when Jesus comes the second time. But with this book ([Hebrews](#)), they would now get key pieces not in picture or shadow form, but in specifics of fulfillment.

But before we jump into the verses, let me just say that if these Jewish believers, having come out of the Law and temple worship believed in Jesus (risking their very lives and relationships to do so), had major pieces they could not answer, yet stepped out in faith anyway, how valid is it to say as an unbeliever, “I can’t answer every single question I have, so therefore I will not trust Jesus until I can (see also [Rom. 11:33-34](#))?”

- You see, they had enough evidence to put their faith in Him, believing the other answers would come in due time. And for me, I’ve been walking with Jesus for almost 31 years. I certainly have more answers than when I started (then I knew I was a sinner who needed saving and that Jesus went to the cross for my salvation. That was the depth of the information I had). And today, I still have many things to learn.
- But one thing I do not suffer from is believing I need to know everything right now to trust Him with my life and eternity. **I hope you** (like these Hebrew believers) **know that He is the only One you can trust to save you from your sin**. What are you waiting for?

*<sup>1</sup>For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup> to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” <sup>3</sup> without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.*

Here we again have that clear pronunciation that Melchizedek is both king and priest. His name in the Hebrew literally means “king of righteousness”. But being the suffix is possessive it really should read “my king of righteousness”. And I like that a lot, because there is a debate going on as to if this *Melchizedek* is Jesus or not. And I will say there are some strong opinions on this- yet differing. But one of the main objections to this being Jesus comes from the words “*like*” in [verse 3](#), and “*likeness*” in [verse 15](#). Yet what I find interesting is in the book of [Daniel](#) we have the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego being thrown into the fiery furnace and then King Nebuchadnezzar (the one who had them thrown in the fire) noting there was another in the fire, saying “*I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like* (or in the likeness of) *the Son of God* ([Dan. 33:25](#))”. So it’s plausible to read this in this way... So let’s look at what the rest of the text has to say.

- Beyond being king and priest (before the priesthood existed) we have Abraham tithing to him. Something we will come back to in a minute. But how did Abraham know in his heart to tithe to this man? Well, **earlier**, Abraham met with the preincarnate Jesus ([Gen. 12:7](#)) after Abraham arrived in Canaan, where the Lord then promised this land to him and his offspring. **In response Abraham built an altar there**. Now the text does not say that Abraham made an offering there on the altar, but being that earlier than that, Noah

(after getting off the Ark) made an altar and a burnt offering to God in [Gen. 8:20](#), many scholars believe that is what is being implied here. I do think that is reasonable because **this is not identified as a monument** (which was also not uncommon [[Gen. 28:18-22, 35:14, Ex. 24:4, Josh. 4:1-9 & 20-24, 1 Sam. 7:10-12](#)]). **The point being, 1) if Abraham had made an offering when He met Jesus the first time (a Christophany) 2) it would seem logical to make an offering the next time also. And 3) Abraham would make an offering to God after He told Abraham not to take Isaac's life (Gen. 22:11-18). All before the law ever came about.** Evidential or circumstantial? **You decide.**

- And as we move to [verse 3](#), which describes Melchizedek in these terms, “*without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually*”. Now, as with the piece we just covered, interpretation is based on how you read this. You could **1)** read this a missing information, meaning no one knows his genealogy and when he was born or died, or **2)** that he did not have a mother or father and remains a priest forever because he never dies. And I will say while [6:19-20](#) speaks specifically of Jesus, in [7:1-3](#) it seems pretty definitive he is talking specifically about **Melchizedek**. **Meaning he would remain a priest forever.** And that would in fact make him eternal because in [verses 23-24](#) it specifically talks about how mortal men who were priests died, therefore putting an end to their priesthood.
- And through the rest of this chapter there seem to be more evidences **in my mind** of this being Jesus. But in the end, **you will have to decide for yourself**. And whatever you choose to adopt as the answer, it will not affect your salvation. Only what you do with Jesus will make that determination.

So, you might say, “why did we just go through all of that if we cannot have a definitive answer”? **First** of all, because as people who love God, we have not become slothful or dull of hearing **the word of God** and searching it out ([5:11-14](#)). Because we want to look into everything He has given us. **And in doing so we have been in multiple places of the bible (Gen. 3, 18, 22, & Dan. 3) beyond our key verses.** Because the bible is the best commentary on the bible. **And I for one love being able to go on that treasure hunt to maturity with you.**

- But **in addition** to that, it has brought us full circle to one of the points in the introduction. You and I might not be able to answer every question pertaining to God, but from what we do know, **1)** Jesus is God who came in human flesh to die in our place, **2)** ascend into heaven to be our great High Priest, **3)** who will forever make intersection for us, **4)** and one day bring us all the way home to be with Him physically.
- We have all we need and much, much more, even without having every answer. The question is not how can I believe in God if I can't first get an answer to every one of my questions? **The question is what will you do with what you so clearly do have?** Because it is far more than enough to know Jesus is “*the way, the truth, and the life*”. And that **No one comes to the Father except through Him** ([John 14:6](#)). What is keeping you from coming to Jesus?

And there is one more important piece to catch before moving on. It has rightly been said that since the church in no longer under the law, we are not bound to the tithing since it is a part of the Law given specifically to Israel. **And in that context, it is 100% true.** And we have mentioned in several studies that there are actually three tithes under the law. Two which were annually at 10% each (because that's what tithe means) and one paid every three years. Making the total around 23% annually.

- **But do catch here that tithing** (specifically giving a 10<sup>th</sup>) **was instituted long before the Law came about** (more than 400 years earlier). And, is the text implying he gave a 10<sup>th</sup> from what he retrieved in the battle or all that he had? We do not know. But we do know in [11:17](#) God retells the account of Abraham not even withholding the life of his son from God, which was the heritage God had given him. **And the point God is making is Abraham would literally withhold nothing from God.** Which made me ask of myself if there was anything I would be reluctant in offer up to God? It's not the first time I have done that, but it was the most recent. And it's a good exercise for all of us to conduct from time to time. **When is the last time you've done that.**
- And there's another principle for tithing here that also applies to us. We see **Abraham tithed where he was blessed.** There are lots of places where we can give. And the needs are real. But tithing where you are blessed is biblical. The other is often referred to as gifts or sacrifices.

Now, I want to say that if you have been around here long, you know I do not bring up tithing until we come to passages that speak about it (which on average is less than once a year). And on one hand I am nauseated by the number of churches and pastor who lust after money. I understand that if this is their vocation (as it is mine), it leaves little to no time left for going and making a living somewhere else (see also 1 Cor. 9:3-14, 1 Tim. 5:17-18). So we don't play music that might soften you up and give fancy speeches to get you to give. **This is Gods ministry and the day He stops funding it we will know we are to look for what He has next for us.** But on the other hand, it's so fitting this is brought up here in this book which has such a strong emphasis on walking in faith. Because to give a tenth of what God gives you requires faith. And I don't mean the faith that He's going to owe you something for giving to Him. **It's the other way around.** We give because He **has** given to us first. **1)** He's given life, **2)** given Jesus a body for our salvation, **3)** and He gives both provision and ability. **And for us, just as it was for Abraham, giving was and is an act of worship and faith.** But that is between you and the Lord. I for one have no idea who gives in this congregation, and I would like to keep it that way.

*<sup>4</sup> Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. <sup>5</sup> And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; <sup>6</sup> but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. <sup>7</sup> Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. <sup>8</sup> Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. <sup>9</sup> Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, <sup>10</sup> for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.* First off, **did you catch that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham?** Now maybe that does not strike you like it struck these Jewish believers, but it should.

- In **Gen. 12:1-3** *the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Folks, to who else did God make a promise like that? No one! It would be carried on through his lineage, but the beginning of the chosen people of God (and other nations which did not previously exist) were brought through father Abraham.
- And we can go to **Rom. 4:16** and hear God tell us that **Abraham is the father of everyone who shares the faith of Abraham.** Who else has that designation among men? No one! So, when the Holy Spirit says in **verse 7** *the lessor is blessed by the better* (greater), He is telling us Melchizedek is greater than even father Abraham. (Many of you are now singing "Father Abraham in your heads right now, aren't you 😊")
- Which then brings his next point. And that is since **Levi** (of whom the line of the priests would come) is of the lineage of Abraham, even though he had not been conceived yet, it means Melchizedek is also greater than the priesthood of the Levites and/or Aaron.

And this leaves me with two other questions (actually one question and one thought) from these verses. The **first** is, **what was the blessing which Melchizedek gave to Abraham?** And the answer to that is we do not know. How anticlimactic 😊. For me it's kind of like when **Philip** jumped into the chariot of the Ethiopian Eunuch who was reading from **Isa. 53** and wanted to know who it spoke about (something the unbelieving Jews to this day avoid because they are blind to see it is Jesus [**Rom. 11:25**]) and here came Philip running alongside the chariot while talking to him (that would get your attention). And the text tells us "*Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.*" But what did he say? We don't know.

- What about when in **Acts 28:23** it tells us of one night while Paul was in Rome, "*he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets* (that's pretty much all of the OT), *from morning till evening.*" I bet you all wish I had that transcript, because there is no way I could compress all that into one night 😊.
- Better yet, in **Luke 24:27**, it says of Jesus Himself, "*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*"
- You see, **we do not know everything we want to know right now** (at least I hope not. Or you have become dull of hearing). But **1)** we know enough to know we need Him. **2)** And we know enough that it should spark a desire in us to know Him more. I don't have the words to this blessing or the specific sermon notes to

these teachings of Luke, Paul, and Jesus. But I have Jesus and the entire bible. And it's available to you too.

So now for that "thought" I had. Isn't it interesting there was tithing before the *commandment* to give tithes, and later (under the Law) there was a *commandment* to for the Levites to receive tithes under the Law. You might say, how is that interesting? I'm glad you asked 😊.

- First, see the progression 1) there was tithing without a commandment, 2) then under the Law there was a commandment, 3) and when Jesus instituted the New Covenant, it then returned to being an act of worship and faith (not a commandment). Now to be clear, Jesus did say "*Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's* (Matt. 22:2-22). But the clear implication there is you were purchased with the blood of another (1 Pet. 1:18-19, 1 Cor. 6:20) so you and everything you have is God's (Rom. 12:1). You are just the steward.
- The difference being when Abraham gave through Melchizedek, and when we give to the church, it is to be of our hearts desire to do so (2 Cor. 9:1-15). And if it is from a reluctant attitude or out of compulsion (2 Cor. 9:7, Deut. 15:10) it's diagnostic that there is something wrong with the heart.
- So here is my thought. Sometimes a commandment can make something that was supposed to be joyful become burdensome, while free will giving opens the door for joy, worship, and faith. And as we are going to find when we come to the next verses (moving back to the priesthood of Melchizedek, which Jesus' priesthood comes through) the Law couldn't make anything perfect. Including giving. But that will have to wait until next time. Which is going to be after Easter.

Folks, let me close with three things today. First of all, you really don't need anymore information to put your faith in Jesus. You have all you need. The decision is up to you. What is keeping you from Him right now?

- Next, for those who have placed your faith in Jesus, what is it you have that He did not give you? If you can add anything to that list, you have come short of understanding. 1) Do you have a strong drive to accomplish something? Who knit you together in your mother's womb? 2) Do you have a talent that provides for you? It's the same God that gave you the body, the mind, the gift you use. We could keep going but you get the point. So what is it you have that you would not be willing to offer to Him? In faith, it's time to grow.
- And finally, do you have a desire to know Him more? We all should. Not out of compulsion, but out of desire. And folks, He has made Himself knowable. I think that is going to be particularly import in the season we are in. You are going to want to know what He has said and how o hear His voice. Dig in and enjoy Him. The bible is better than any book ever written by human inspiration.