

Hebrews

Chapter 7:1-10

Hebrews 6:19-20 > ¹⁹ *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and reliable and one which enters within the veil,* ²⁰ *where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

¹ ***For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,***

Here is a bit more background before we get to these verses.

Barnes >

- **Hebrews 5:10-11** > The apostle introduced the name of Melchizedek, and said that Christ was made an high priest after the same order as he. He added, that he had much to say of him, but that they were not in a state of mind then to receive or understand it.
- **Hebrews 5:12-14** > He rebukes them for the little progress which they had made in Christian knowledge.
- **Hebrews 6:1-3** > He exhorts them to go on and make higher attainments.
- **Hebrews 6:4-8** > He warns them against the danger of apostasy.
- **Hebrews 6:9-20** > He encourages them to hold fast their faith and hope to the end, in view of the covenant faithfulness of God.
- And now (here in Chapter 7) he returns to the subject under discussion - "The High Priesthood of Christ."

Precept Austin > Remember that in Hebrews 5:5-10 the writer began to speak of the Melchizedek but then began a lengthy parenthetical section from Hebrews 5:11 through Hebrews 6:20. This parenthesis was to prepare his "dull of hearing" readers so that they might better understand of this important chapter.

There is a point of application we in the modern church need to consider and it is this -- the solid food and sound doctrine of Scripture is not revealed by the Spirit to those who are spiritually lazy or apathetic. In Hebrews 7:4 we encounter the only command in this entire chapter, and it is to give careful consideration (as contrasted with a superficial reading) to this teaching on Melchizedek because he is a type of Jesus Christ, the One Whose beauty and glory we desire to see.

We also need to look at the two passages quoted throughout this chapter:

Genesis 14:17-24 > ¹⁷ Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, Who has handed over your enemies to you." And he gave him a tenth of everything. ²¹ Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the possessions for yourself." ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, so that you do not say, 'I have made Abram rich.' ²⁴ I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

Psalms 110:4 > The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

For > Strong's > gar; a primary particle; properly, assigning a reason (used in argument, explanation or intensification; often with other particles)

Melchizedek > Barnes > The name Melchizedek, from which the apostle derives a portion of his argument here, is Hebrew, מלכי־צדק Malkiy-Tsedeq, and is correctly explained as meaning "king of righteousness" - being compounded of two words - "king and righteousness."

Salem > Strong's > Of Hebrew origin (Shalem); Salem (i.e. Shalem), a place in Palestine -- Salem. (Shalem > Peaceful)

Precept Austin > The Hebrew word for "Salem" is *shalem* which is, in turn, derived from the same Hebrew root as *shalom* "peace".

King of Salem > Precept Austin > Salem is also another name for Jerusalem, as deduced from **Psalms 76:1-2** > ¹ God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. ² His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion.

Priest of the Most High God > MacArthur > He was called a priest of Most High God, *El Elyon*, meaning Sovereign Lord, which indicated that Melchizedek worshiped and served the same God whom Abram worshiped, *Yahweh—El Elyon*.

Hebrews 7 is an important chapter for in it the writer establishes the following points...

- 1). Melchizedek's historic identity
- 2). Melchizedek's precedence and superiority to Levitical priesthood
 - a). Abraham paid him tithes (so then did Levi)
 - b). Melchizedek blessed Abraham
- 3). The need for a replacement of the Law because it...
 - a). Could not make perfect
 - b). Jesus was from another tribe not specified in Mosaic Law
- 4). The advantages of the Melchizedekian order...
 - a). A better hope = access to God (draw near)
 - b) A guarantee of a better covenant
 - c). A permanent priesthood
 - d). Salvation forever... and a priest Who ever intercedes
- 5). A dramatic contrast between Jesus' priesthood and the Levitical priesthood
 - a) Jesus is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated, exalted
 - b). Jesus offered up one sacrifice of himself for all time.

² *to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.*

Apportioned > HELPS > from *méros*, "a single part, member" – properly, to *divide*, distribute into parts (portions), i.e. separate (distinguish) one part from another.

A tenth of all the spoils > Utley > Notice that the tithe (cf. Gen. 14:20) is older than the Mosaic law.

Pentacost > when Melchizedek came out to meet Abraham, he pronounced a twofold blessing. First, he pronounced a blessing upon Abraham (**Ge 14:19** > ¹⁹ *And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;*), evidently because he recognized that Abraham's victory was a victory by faith. He also pronounced a blessing upon God Most High (**Ge 14:20** > ²⁰ *And blessed be God Most High, Who has handed over your enemies to you.*). Even though the conflict was waged in faith, the victory did not belong to Abraham. The victory was God's—through Abraham—so that the honor and the glory for the victory must be given to God Most High. Abraham's response was to give Melchizedek a tithe of all the spoils of the conquest (Ge 14:20). In giving the tithes, Abraham was declaring that the victory was not his, but God's. Therefore all of the spoils did not belong to Abraham, but they rightly belonged to God. In giving a tithe he recognized God's right to all he had taken in battle.

First of all ... > Ironsides > Righteousness must come before peace. We are told in *Isaiah 32:17* > *And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.*

³ ***Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.***

Without father, without mother > Barnes > The Syriac has given the correct view of the meaning of the apostle. In that version it is, "Of whom neither the father nor mother are recorded in the genealogies."

Without genealogy > Barclay > This was unusual for two reasons. (a) It is the reverse of the regular practice of Genesis. Genealogies are a feature of Genesis, where long lists of a man's ancestors constantly occur. But Melchizedek arrives on the scene, as it were, from nowhere. (b) Far more importantly, it is the reverse of the rules which governed the Aaronic priesthood, which depended entirely on descent. Under Jewish law, a man could not under any circumstances become a priest unless he could produce a certificated pedigree going back to Aaron. Character and ability had nothing to do with it; the one essential was that pedigree.

Made like > Swindoll > The author of Hebrews interprets the way Moses described Melchizedek in Genesis 14 to clarify that Melchizedek was "made like the Son of God." The word translated "made like" is *aphomoioō* and means "to make something resemble another thing." This doesn't mean that Melchizedek was in his nature the Son of God or that he was in his nature eternal, divine, angelic, or heavenly. Rather, it means that in the text of Scripture (that is, in the narrative), the description of Melchizedek displays some striking similarities that serve as a "type," "foreshadowing," or illustration of the true eternal high priest, Jesus Christ.

Robertson > to produce a facsimile or copy, only here in N.T.

MacArthur > This means literally "made to be like"

Made like the Son of God > Guthrie > The real key to the writer's exegetical method is found in the phrase resembling the Son of God. The word translated *resembling* occurs only here in the New Testament. It is a suggestive word, used in the active of 'a facsimile copy or model' and in the passive of 'being made similar to'. It is because Jesus Christ is of the order of Melchizedek that the representative of the order is seen to be a model of the true. **In other words, it is Christ's priesthood that is the standard, not that of Melchizedek.**

Precept Austin > Note carefully that the Son of God is not made like Melchizedek, but he (Melchizedek) is made like the Son of God, and thus Melchizedek is presented in Scripture in such a way that he points to the truth about the Son of God.

Constable > Limiting our knowledge of Melchizedek to what Moses specifically stated, this first priest mentioned in Scripture had no known parents ("without father, without mother") or children ("without genealogy") and no known birth ("beginning of days") or death ("end of life"). In this too Melchizedek represented the eternal Son of God.

Remains > Strong's > A primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy) abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for)

Perpetually > Precept Austin > is the Greek phrase *eis to dienekes*. *Eis* is a preposition of motion into any place or thing. Figuratively *eis* marks the point toward which anything ends. *Dienekes* means carried through or stretched the whole length and thus protracted, continual or perpetual. Taken together this phrase means for all time or without interruption.

⁴Now **observe** how great this (man) was to whom Abraham, the **patriarch**, gave a tenth of the **choicest spoils**.

Observe > HELPS > from *theáomai*, "to gaze, contemplate" – gaze on for the purpose of analyzing (discriminating).

Patriarch > Guthrie > The position of the words in the Greek text heightens the contrast, for the words the patriarch come right at the **end**, as if to emphasize the dignity of the one who offered the tithes.

Precept Austin > This designation is important to the writer's logic, and he accentuates in the original Greek sentence by placing *patriarches* emphatically at the end of the sentence.

Choicest spoils > (Look what these Greek words means!) *the top of a heap* (The only place this is used in the Bible) Robertson > Old word from *ακρος* > *top*, and *θις* > *a heap* (the top of the pile).

⁵And those **indeed** of **the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have a commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their countrymen, although they are descended from Abraham**.

Indeed > Strong's > shows affirmation or concession

The sons of Levi who receive the priest's office > Precept Austin > The implication is that the reference here is not to *all* Levites, for not all were priests but only those who were *out of* (preposition *ek* = out of or from) the tribe of Levi **and** from the house of Aaron and thus were duly qualified to be priests.

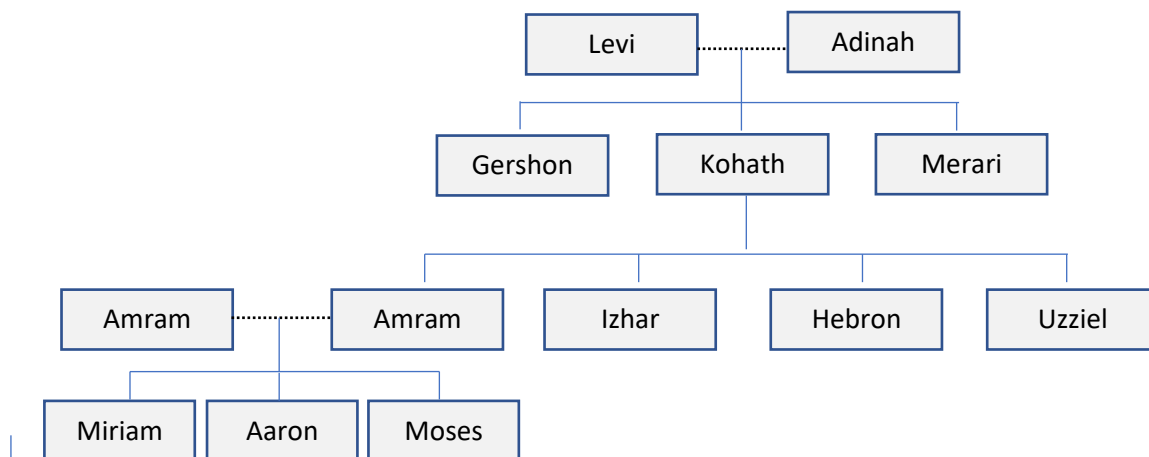
Have a commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people > Barnes > **Deuteronomy 14:22, Deuteronomy 14:27-29** (next page)

Deuteronomy 14:22 > ²² "You shall certainly tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes from the field every year.

Deuteronomy 14:27-29 > ²⁷ Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you. ²⁸ "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and you shall deposit it in your town. ²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the stranger, the orphan, and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Guthrie > The Levitical priests had a legal right, a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people. **Numbers 18:26** sets out these rights.

Numbers 18:26 > ²⁶ "Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, 'When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe.



From their countrymen > Leon Morris > The law required tithes to be taken of people of whom the priests were "brothers." There is a sense in which the priests had no inherent superiority. They were kin to those who gave tithes to them. They owed their ability to collect tithes to the provision made in the law and not to any natural superiority. But with Melchizedek (verse 6) it was different. He "did not trace his descent from Levi." Melchizedek was not simply one among a host of brothers. He was a solitary figure of grandeur. And he exacted tithes not simply from his brothers but from Abraham. His greatness stands out.

⁶ **But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.** ⁷ **But without any dispute the lesser person is blessed by the greater.**

But > Precept Austin > But (de)) introduces a striking contrast

Genealogy is ... traced > Strong's > from *ginomai* > *to come into being*, and *lego* > *to say* > therefore > to reckon by generations, i.e. Trace in genealogy -- count by descent.

Vincent > Lit. he who is not genealogically derived from them

Collected a tenth from Abraham > Vincent > Melchisedec, who has no part in the Levitical genealogy, and therefore no legal right to exact tithes, took tithes from the patriarch himself. Hence he was greater than Abraham. The right of the Levitical priest to receive tithes was only a legal right, conferred by special statute, and therefore implied no intrinsic superiority to his brethren; but Melchisedec, though having no legal right, received tithes from Abraham as a voluntary gift, which implied Abraham's recognition of his personal greatness.

And blessed the one who had the promises > Pink > To make this detail the more emphatic, the apostle stresses the dignity of Abraham, for the more glorious he was, the more illustrious the dignity of the one qualified to pronounce a benediction upon him. Thus Abraham is here referred to as he who "had the promises". He was the first of the Israelitish race with whom God made the covenant of life.

Guthrie > The comparison which the writer intends to make is not between Abraham and Melchizedek, but between Aaron and Melchizedek. It is the two orders of priesthood that he has in mind. This explains the sudden reference to Levi.

Dispute > Precept Austin > (*antilogia* from *antilego* = contradict <> *anti* = *against* + *lego* = *speak*) literally means "a word spoken against" or speaking against and so talking back, face to face, in opposition against (a dispute involving opposite opinions).

⁸ *In this case **mortal** men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that **he lives on**.*

Mortal > HELPS > from *apó* > *away from*, which intensifies *thnḗskō* > *to die* – properly, *die off* (away from),

Precept Austin > Literally this reads "men who are continually dying".

He lives on > Barnes > There is not in Genesis, indeed, any direct record that he lives, but there is the absence of a record that he died, and this seems to have been regarded as in fact a record of permanency in the office; or as having an office which did not pass over to successors by the death of the then incumbent.

⁹ *And, **so to speak**, through **Abraham** even Levi, who received tithes, has paid tithes,* ¹⁰ *for he was still in the loins of his forefather when Melchizedek met him.*

So to speak > Barnes > It is used precisely as it is with us when we say "so to speak," or "if I may be allowed the expression." It is employed when what is said is not strictly and literally true, but when it amounts to the same thing, or when about the same idea is conveyed. "It is a "softening down" of an expression which a writer supposes his readers may deem too strong, or which may have the appearance of excess or severity. It amounts to an indirect apology for employing an unusual or unexpected assertion or phrase."

Abraham > Pink (quoting F.S. Sampson) Abraham was truly the covenant-head of his posterity in the line of Isaac and Jacob, in whose descendants the promises made to him were fulfilled. It was in virtue of this covenant with Abraham, that the Jews inherited their distinguished privileges as a nation. It was the transaction with Abraham which brought them into the relation of a 'peculiar people' to Jehovah; and hence, in his patriarchal character and acts, he stood forth as the representative or federal head of the nation, so far as all the promises, privileges, and institutions of the Judaical were concerned.

Barclay:

- The Levites receive tithes from the people, and that is a right that only the Levites enjoy. Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham, and he was not a member of the tribe of Levi.
- The Levites tithe their brother Israelites; but Melchizedek was not an Israelite; he was a stranger; and it was no ordinary Israelite from who he received tithes; it was from no less a person than Abraham, the founder of the nation.
- It was due to a legal enactment that the Levites had the right to exact tithes; but Melchizedek received tithes for the sake of what he was personally, and not because of any legal enactment. He had such an essential and personal greatness that he needed no legal enactment to entitle him to receive tithes.
- The Levites receive tithes as dying men but Melchizedek lives forever.
- Levi was a direct descendant of Abraham and Levi was the only man legally entitled to receive tithes. Now, if Levi was a direct descendant of Abraham it means that Levi was already in Abraham's body. It was Abraham who begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Levi; therefore, it can be argued that even at this time Levi was potentially in Abraham's body. Therefore, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, Levi also paid them, because he was included in Abraham's body; therefore Levi, the one man who was entitled to receive tithes, actually paid tithes to Melchizedek.

Wuest translation of the passage > *And so to speak, by the intermediate agency of Abraham also Levi who receives tithes, has paid tithes, for yet in the loins of his father he was when Melchisedec met him.*