

## What We Can Know about Melchisedec

*Who was Melchisedec? Was this historical king of Salem the same person as Jesus? Why would Jesus become a high priest after the order of Melchisedec?*

Melchisedec was a priest and a ruler of the city of Salem in the land of Canaan during the days of Abraham's sojourn in the Land of Promise. But to the apostles of Jesus, Melchisedec was a relatively unknown historical figure who stepped into Israel's history on the day the king of Sodom went out to meet Abraham coming back from a regional conflict in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, what the apostles did know about Melchisedec—relative to his priesthood—was that he was: “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually” (Heb. 7:3).

Which is a statement that has invited some conjecture about the person of Melchisedec.

Particularly so as the biblical context of this statement—Melchisedec's priesthood—is sometimes discarded and replaced with the unrelated context of eternal life. Leading to the assumption that the apostles were putting forward the conclusion that Melchisedec was an eternal being who served Abraham after the defeat of an invading Mesopotamian confederation.

However, such a conclusion ignores the context established by the apostles, which was the issue of Melchisedec's priesthood and its relevance to the priesthood of Jesus.

Thus, in the context of Melchisedec's priesthood, the apostles were stating that Melchisedec was “without father” and

“without mother,” that is he was of unknown paternity and maternity, which implied that a pedigree was not considered necessary to formalize the legitimacy of his priesthood, as it was with the priesthood of Aaron. And so Melchisedec was said to be “without descent [*agenealogetos*],” relative to a priestly pedigree, because he was unregistered in terms of his birth and consequently his father and mother were unknown to the authors of the book of Hebrews. [Author's emphasis throughout.]

But let's examine this further.

Now even though there was no record of Melchisedec's parents in regard to his lineage, we can confirm that he did indeed have parents, and this is understood by how the authors of Hebrews made the comparison between the recorded priestly lineage of Aaron and the unrecorded lineage of Melchisedec. Noting that the authors of Hebrews affirmed the existence of Melchisedec's unknown record of his lineage—relative to his priesthood—when they stated that his “descent” was not “counted from them, who had the right to receive tithes” (Heb. 7:6).

Leaving us with the conclusion that such a comparative statement in the context of tithing could not be made unless there was an existing family pedigree for Melchisedec. Which allows us to say that the comparison of these two pedigrees—one known, one unknown—is an admission of his “descent,” which becomes the evidence for the existence of Melchisedec's family lineage, even though it was not a priestly pedigree associated with the lineage of Aaron (Lev. 21:10).

Simply, then, Melchisedec's father and mother were not “inscribed” among the

genealogies in regard to the priesthood of Aaron, and therefore the statement that: “he whose genealogy [pedigree] is not counted from them,” becomes the confirming statement that Melchisedec did indeed have a “genealogy,” although the pedigree was unknown to the apostles of Jesus (Heb. 7:6, ASV.)

Bringing us to consider this.

That even though the apostles didn’t know anything about Melchisedec’s father and mother, and they didn’t know when he was born, or when he died as a king of Salem, they nonetheless did know that Melchisedec was: “made like unto the Son of God” in regard to his priesthood because he would remain “a priest continually” (Heb. 7:3). That is to say that Melchisedec was not eternal, but he was a priest for life, which explains the nature of his priestly order that was associated with the priest-kings of Salem (Ps. 110:4). (Melchisedec is not stated to be the “son of God,” but one who is “like unto” the son of God in the context of his priesthood.)

Therefore, we can say that Jesus was not already a priest “of” this order, but became a high priest “after” this order, because he is yet to rule as a priest-king in the kingdom of God.

Allowing us to conclude then that Melchisedec was not an eternal being.

And also that Melchisedec was not Jesus.

For Scripture tells us that: “those priests [Melchisedec included] were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swears and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec: By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests [Melchisedec and others included], because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood” (Heb. 7:21-24).

And so Jesus was made an eternal high priest: “not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7:16).

Therefore, by being made immortal Jesus became the “forerunner” in receiving the promise of eternal life, and was “made” a high priest “for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 6:20).

Which again allows us to conclude that Melchisedec was not Jesus.

Consequently, if we assume a context that makes Melchisedec eternal, then his priesthood would have also been eternal and unchangeable, as it is with Jesus’ priesthood. And if Melchisedec was Jesus, then Jesus’ eternal priesthood was already established and in practice at Jerusalem before he was made a high priest at the right hand of God the Father—following the resurrection from the dead—which would be a conclusion that contradicts what is clearly recorded in the book of Hebrews (Heb. 7:21-22).

Now Scripture tells us that Melchisedec’s genealogy was not reckoned with the priesthood associated with Aaron, but he did have a descent from a family lineage, which means that Melchisedec could not have been Jesus. And given this conclusion we note that Jesus himself had a family lineage and a pedigree, being reckoned through the lineage of his mother Mary, and by this lineage we know that Jesus—like Melchisedec—was not reckoned with the priesthood of Aaron. Because Matthew and Luke specifically address the issue of the “genesis” of Jesus in a lineage that affirms that he was from the line of Judah, and a descendant of King David of Jerusalem, and a descendant of Adam who was also called the “son of God” (Mt. 1:1-16; Lk. 3:23-38). (Jesus had a step-father and siblings and other known relatives as verified in the record of Luke.)

Making the pedigree of Jesus most important.

Because Jesus will someday accede to the throne of his forefather David, and by reason of this it is of necessity that his lineage be of the line of David, and of the line of Judah who—like Levi—was a great grandson of Abraham. And so Scripture states that: “Christ cometh of the seed of David,” and therefore of the seed of Abraham (Jn. 7:42; Rom. 1:3).

Offering us then even more evidence that Jesus was not Melchisedec.

For when Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils of war to Melchisedec, and not the obligatory tithe of his increase, we learn that the then unborn Levi, the great grandson of Abraham, was considered to have paid tithes to Melchisedec through his great grandfather Abraham. A concept that would have also applied to the then unborn “fathers” of the twelve tribes of Israel at that time, which demonstrates that the priestly order of Melchisedec, in the context of his kingship, represented an “order” that was greater than the priesthood of Aaron. Being affirmed by the action of Abraham giving a tenth of the spoils to Melchisedec, for it is: “without contradiction, the lesser is blessed by the better” (Heb. 7:5, 7).

Which brings us to consider this.

That Jesus’ lineage was also reckoned through Abraham, by Abraham’s great grandson Judah, and therefore it is legitimate to say that Jesus—and each descendant of the twelve tribes—was at that time: “yet in his father’s [Abraham’s] loins when Melchizedek met him [Abraham],” even though Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:10; Mt. 1:1). For Jesus: “of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb.

7:13-14). (Adam was a “son of God” and by a genealogical reckoning all those descended from Adam are considered in this context to be sons of God.)

Meaning that Jesus, like Melchisedec, did not have a priestly pedigree associated with the tribe of Levi because Jesus was born in the lineage of Judah, with Judah being the great grandson of Abraham. And as Jesus was born to be a king, and he was made a high priest—by an oath—we see that respective to his kingship he would be a priest “after the order” of Melchisedec, which implies that Jesus’ priesthood is better than the priesthoods of Aaron and Melchisedec because Jesus was “made a surety of a better testament” (Heb. 7:22). (See also: 1 Kgs. 7:51; 8:62-66.) (Jesus was understood to be a “son of Abraham” (Lk. 19:9).)

Making it additionally evident that Jesus was not Melchisedec the high priest of Salem.

But let’s examine this a little more.

The priesthood of Melchisedec was a different priesthood from the Aaronic priesthood, but neither of these priesthoods were to continue with Aaron or Melchisedec forever, and so there was a need for “another priest”—one who would be eternal—and by reason of him being a king he would also be after the order of Melchisedec, but not in the lineage of Aaron or Melchisedec (Heb. 7:11). And because there would be “another priest” like Melchisedec, it is again evident that Jesus was not Melchisedec, because it is: “yet far more evident: for that after the similitude [alike, but not identical] of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest” (Heb. 7:15).

This is plain.

There was Melchisedec and there was to be “another priest” that would be established after the order of Melchisedec, just like there was “another tribe” other than Levi from which there would come another priesthood,

which means that Melchisedec and Jesus are not one and the same person, noting that Scripture accounts for two priests, just as it does for two tribes, and so the one is not the other, which allows us then to conclude that Jesus was not the high priest Melchisedec (Hebrews 5:5-6, 10; 7:13, 24-28).   
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