

**Image:** Chad tickets in suite for Cowboy's game vs. Joe tickets in last row for basketball game.

Contrast the quality of seats based on mediator.

**Need:** We need a mediator. We can't get to God without one. But who is best? An earthly priest? A good person? A saint? Mary? We need to make certain our mediator is the best so we don't miss out on access to God. We don't want to be in the cheap seats on this one.

**Context:** After a slight detour to warn these folks to continue to press to maturity, no matter what, in the light of God's faithfulness; he returns to the main argument of the book. Christ is best. He is better than angels. He is better than Moses. Now, He is better than any other priest. He ministers in a better sanctuary as mediator of a better covenant. Again, the point is, "where else are you gonna go?" In this section, he skillfully lays the groundwork for this idea by bringing Melchizedek back into focus. Why is his priesthood so important? This text is a "servant" text in that it lays the groundwork for what is to come. Why is Christ a better priest than Aaron? He begins that answer here with a deft logical truism. Next week, he's going to expand on its theological implications for his readers and us.

I. First premise: Christ is like Melchizedek (or Melchizedek is like Christ) (1-3)

A. Both have similar names & descriptions. *Naming kids – names create associations* (1-2)

1. **King of righteousness:** (2b) Heb. *melek + zedek*. **Jer. 23:6** – "the Lord our righteousness"
2. **King of peace (Salem/Jerusalem/Shalom):** **Is. 9:6** – "Prince of peace", **Eph. 2:14** – "He is our peace". Incidentally, the connection between righ and peace is an important one. There is no peace with God apart from righ (**Is. 32:17** – "work of righ is peace"; **Rom. 5:1** – "having been justified, we have peace". And the joining of righ and peace in **Ps. 85:10** – "righ and peace have kissed each other"). So this notion of righ & peace as part of Messiah's works is well-established in Scripture.

3. **Priest of God Most High**

- a. Dual offices of King and priest no possible in Judaism. King=Judah, Priest=Levi
- b. "**Without genealogy**" – genealogy critical in Israel for priests. In **Neh. 7**, former priests returning from exile excluded bc can't prove genealogy. But Mel. and XC are different.

B. Both appear eternal in their priesthood (3)

1. Mel. appears in the record out of nowhere and then disappears just as quickly never to be heard from again. Main clause of v. 1-3 is "**He (Mel.) has his priesthood forever**".
  - a. The author doesn't believe he's literally eternal. Apparently, he's part of a line of priests.
  - b. But the author does believe that the silence of the biblical account of Melchizedek is significant in pointing to something else.
2. He says that Mel. was "**made like the Son of God**." Mel., in appearing eternal in the narrative, points to something deeper: the eternal priesthood of Christ. Hebrews argues that the silence of **Gen. 14** was intentional because Mel. was a "type" of Christ. Christ being the fulfillment. *This is not allegory, where we arbitrarily impose our own connections on the text. That is not a good interpretive practice because we believe that meaning rests with the author, not the readers. Rather, what the author sees and makes here is a "preordained" connection between the figurative eternity of Mel. and the literal eternity of XC.*
3. So Mel. is only a picture in a figurative sense of the literal eternity of Christ (which he has already gone to great lengths to explain Christ's connection to God). He'll go on to argue.

C. So how is the connection between Christ and Melchizedek established by the author of Heb.?

1. First, explicitly. In **5:6, 10; 6:20** he states that Christ is a priest in the order of Melchizedek.
2. Second, he's just argued that Mel. is a figurative picture of the eternal Christ.
3. Third, he interprets **Gen. 14:18-20** Christologically in the light of **Psalms 110:4**. Here in Hebrews, Gen. 14, and Ps. 110 are the only places in Scripture that Mel. is mentioned.
  - a. We've already seen **Ps. 110** as picturing Jesus and His deity. Clearly Messianic for Heb.
  - b. We practice these same principles: We believe Scripture interprets Scripture. That we can understand certain texts based on the rest of Scripture. We also believe Scripture is best understood with Christ as its center. So here **Psalms 110** helps interpret **Gen. 14**.
  - c. Here's what happens in **Gen. 14** (*Bruce, 157*). This is all we know about Mel. The author of Heb. sees the silence about Mel. in the light of **Ps. 110** and what he knows about XC.

*(So the first premise is that Christ is like Melchizedek. Here's the second...)*

- II. Mel. is greater than Abraham (4-10). Corollary: Mel. priesthood greater than priesthood from Abe. This greatness is based on 3 things in **verses 4-10**.
- A. First, Mel. received tithes from Abe (4-6a, 9-10) and the lesser tithes to the greater. (*end A*)
1. Make no mistake, Abraham was great. “**great Patriarch**” (4), “**possessor of promises**” (6b). And yet he gave of the top of the heap to Mel. in **Gen. 14**.
  2. Tithing was a well-understood principle in Judaism (5-6a). (**Num. 18:21, 24, 26**) People tithed to Levites. Levites tithed to the priests. But they were all brothers. There was no inherent difference or superiority. But here, there was no reason for Abe to tithe, except that he recognized the greatness and superiority of Mel.
  3. He even goes so far to argue that all the Levites, as they were represented in the loins of their father Abraham, also paid tithes to Mel. and recognized his superiority themselves. Common in Bible to understand all descendants as present in ancestor (cf, **Rom. 5:12** – our relationship to Adam in sinning).
- B. Second, Mel. blessed Abe (6b-7)
1. Mel. received tithe (noting Abe's recognition of his superiority) and, then, blessed him.
  2. The lesser is blessed by greater in sense of extending a formal, binding blessing to another.
  3. The story in **Gen. 14** is interesting. There is no dialogue, no scripting...Abe recognizes Mel's greatness and tithes to him. Mel. then responds with a blessing.
- C. Third, Mel. lives on forever (3, 6a, 8).
1. Again, nowhere in the Bible is it stated that Mel. lost his priestly office by dying. You can't go to another text to see his death and, by extension, the loss of his office. In that figurative sense, he is a priest forever.
  2. This represents a very strong contrast. The Levites all died and were replaced (8 – **mortal men**). Mel. seemingly didn't. And we know XC is alive forevermore in fact.

*(So the second premise is that Mel. is greater than Abe. And the important thing for the author is that, by extension the priesthood that comes from Mel. is then greater than that which comes from Abe.)*

- III. Based on those 2 premises, XC is like Mel. and Mel. is greater than Abe (and that the Mel. order of priests is greater than Aaron, the conclusion is that XC is greater than Aaron. He is a better priest.
- A. So, again, the reason Mel. is important is because his superiority over Abraham illustrates XC's superiority over Aaron. This is what he will spend the next few chapters expanding.
- B. This conclusion is important for us because our mediator, XC, is the best one available. We really can't do better than XC. He takes us to the suite – only One who can. “**Behind veil**” (6:19-20).
- C. Remember the main clause of **v. 1-3**. Mel. is a priest who abides forever. That was true in a figurative sense. It's not figurative for Jesus. He literally abides forever...resident at the right hand of God where He constantly lives to make intercession for His people. He is a forever mediator, and there's no one better. We don't have to question our access to God because our access is dependent on our mediator. If our mediator is a forever priest, then we have forever access to God. But I don't want to get ahead of myself.

**Conc.:** Do you see why this text is here? By establishing that XC is a priest of the kind of Mel., and that Mel. was greater than Abraham and so his priestly order is greater than that that came from Abe., he can go on to argue the implications for that. Jesus is the best. As Peter said in his sermon to the rulers and elders of Judaism in **Acts 4:12**, “*there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.*” He's it, so trust Him alone.