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Hebrews 7 - Part I

Without Beginning or Ending

Melchizedek was mentioned in Hebrews, chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 7, details of why he is a type for Christ as priest is given in more detail. Of the nine times Melchizedek is mentioned in the N.T., six of them appear in chapter 7. His name appears only twice in the O.T., Gen 14:18; Ps 110:4, these being the only Biblical records. However, he was important enough as a type to show the change that took place at the cross, concerning the law and priesthood.

Read Hebrews 7:1-2:

1. What terms are used to describe Melchizedek?

Read Hebrews 7:3-10, 15-17:

2. How do these terms in verse 3 apply to both Melchizedek and Christ, and how is the priesthood of Christ different than the Levitical? Gen 5:3-8 (Example of genealogy); Neh 7:5, 63-64 (Requirement of Levite priests)

3. There is a division as to the city of Melchizedek, Salem or Shalem, Gen 14:18; 33:18. What difference does it make to have the correctly city identified? Ps 76:1-2; Pr 25:28; Gal 4:25-26; Rv 21:2

4. Combining verses 8 and 16-17, what difference is pointed out between a Levite priest and Jesus as priest?

Read Hebrews 7:11-14, 18-19:

5. Why was it necessary to establish another priesthood? Verses 11, 19; Gal 3:18, 21

6. On what basis is the overall difference between the Levite priesthood and that of Jesus? Verses 12, 18

1a. No note

2a. {Genealogy: record of parents & their descendants; Beginning of days, end of life: no birth or death records; Made like the Son of God in that no such records exist on the Son of God either. Christ is referred to in scripture as the 'Son of God' & the 'Son of man.' There are birth & death records on Jesus. A Levite priest had to have a record of genealogy as proof of his eligibility to be a priest. A high priest was appointed for life & must be descendant of Aaron. Upon death, another qualified Levite would take his place - not so with the Son of God, whose priestly ministry is based on an endless life. See Note 1 at the end of the study.}

3a. {Scripture likens a city to a spirit which is of the mind. Jerusalem above is the spiritual mother of us all - the holy spirit of God, a type destroyed by changing the city represented. The roots of the Hebrew indicate the name Jerusalem means *teaching of peace*, while tradition says a *city of peace*. It is the correct understanding of the cross that gives peace to the mind of man. See Note 2 at the end of the study.}

4a. {The Jews generally rejected Jesus as the expected Messiah. Leaders even paid the guards of the tomb to lie about the resurrection, Mt 28:11-15. A Levite priest could continue by reason of death, but Christ is priest forever based on an endless life. See Note 3 at the end of the study.}

5a. No note.

6a. {Both the priesthood of the Levites & Christ were established by God, Heb 5:4-5. Levite priests were ministers of a law of works, called the 'old covenant,' Dt 4:13. The deeper meaning of the law was totally missed, Mt 22:36-40. Jesus, as minister of the 'new covenant,' Heb 12:24, began to change the view of the law, applying it inward to the heart (cf Matthew, chapters 5-7); Paul referred to the new understanding as a spiritual (of the Spirit) law, Rom 7:6, 14.}

Notes:

1. All commentators do not agree with each other on Hebrews 7:3. Some think that without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God means that Melchizedek was a heavenly being, if not a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Himself. Yet David was a type of Christ and the kingship, and Jesus descended from the lineage of David, Lk 1:31-32. (Cp also Eliakim, Isa 22:20-24; Rv 3:7). Christ is represented two ways in scripture: 1) as the Son of God - Melchizedek; 2) as the Son of man - David.

2. Strong indicates Shalem as an early name of Jerusalem. According to Jerome (4 AD), who says he received his information from some learned Jews, it was the town which is mentioned Genesis 33:18, as a city of Shechem. However, Shechem is not a proper noun like Salem. Shalem^{h8003} means *complete, safe, peaceful*. Genesis 33:18 should read: *And Jacob came safely^{h8003} to the city of Shechem....* According to Josephus, (Antiq. lib. 1. cap. 11,) Jewish historian, Salem, the city of Melchizedek, was Jerusalem. While there seems to be no direct proof, likely the Jews who rejected Jesus as Messiah wanted Melchizedek connected with a city of Shechem and not Jerusalem. See Note 3.

3. The Hebrew Masoretic Text from which the O.T. of the KJ and all modern Bibles are translated was a revision by the Masorite Jews (1008 AD) wherein they shaved 650 years from the linages in Genesis Chapter 11. When the linages are plotted out, Shem is shown to have outlived eight of his sons, and lived well into the time of Abraham. The Jews claim that Shem & Melchizedek are the same person & therefore the Levite priesthood passed from Melchizedek/Shem through the lineage to Levi. Therefore Jesus could not be the Messiah as he was not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Judah. This may be one reason that Paul warned against getting into disputes over genealogies, Tit 3:9; 1Tim 1:4. The Jews could not, however, refute the resurrection, which is used here in Hebrews, and to which there are several dozen references (cf Act 2:24, 32, Rom 1:4). The endless life of the Son of God becomes proof of him being a Priest forever. Furthermore, only one could raise Jesus from the dead - the Father, Gal 1:1, proving that there is only one God & Jesus is the Son of God, 1Cor 8:5-6.