

Melchizedek

by Henry Law

The sermon explores the significance of Melchizedek as a type of Jesus and the importance of understanding the priesthood of Jesus and the sacrifice He made for us.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 5:6, Hebrews 7:1, Hebrews 7:24, Hebrews 9:11

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "High Priesthood"

Description

Henry Law preaches about the mysterious and majestic figure of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18, who serves as both king of Salem and priest of the most high God, symbolizing Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Melchizedek's lineage and beginning are shrouded in mystery, much like the eternal nature of Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus, as the eternal High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, embodies righteousness and peace, offering Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sinners to bring reconciliation with God.

Transcript

"Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God."
Genesis 14:18

The first war, which darkens history's page, is ended. Abraham is moving homewards--crowned with success--laden with spoil. Suddenly a scene breaks on us--marvelous in what it reveals--marvelous in what it conceals. A personage, who is all wonder, stands on the stage of Scripture. His name bids us mark him well. It is a full Gospel-note. He is high in earthly dignity, for he is Salem's king. He is high in holy function, for he is the priest of the most high God. Do we ask his lineage? It is shrouded in a veil, which we may not pierce. Do we seek the morning of his days? His sun never rises. Do we seek the evening of his life? His sun never sets. He only appears in full-blown stature, and in meridian blaze. So obscure is he in sublimity, so sublime in obscurity, that it is no surprise to hear the question, Can this be merely man? He comes forward with neither empty hand nor silent lip. He strengthens the patriarch with refreshment for the way. He adds, too, the greater strength of blessing in the name of God. Abraham owns the claim to reverence and to homage. He presents a tenth part of all.

Such is the record. But Scripture pauses not here. It teaches us, that all these lines of mystery are lineaments of Jesus. It shows, in this stately person, no doubtful glimpse of the glories of the office of the Lord. It tells us in distinct phrase, he is "made like unto the Son of God." The tidings are often repeated, that Jesus is "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Hence faith, which only lives looking unto

Jesus, sits at His feet in holy, happy musings, and finds the cheering of full Gospel-rays.

Behold Melchizedek! In wise purpose his descent is hid far beyond our sight. So, too, clouds and darkness mantle the first rise of Jesus. He is, by eternal generation, the co-eternal Son of the co-eternal Father. But who can grasp such mystery? He, who begets precedes not the begotten. This truth is a boundless ocean. Let us meekly stand on the shore and marvel. But let us not repine, that we cannot fathom what is fathomless. This truth hides its lofty summit in the heaven of heavens. Let the poor worms of earth repose in reverence around the base. But let them not venture to climb the giddy heights. To know God's essence, we must have God's mind. To see Him as He is, we must be like Him. To span the lengths of His nature, we must have His infinitudes. To survey His magnitude, we must sit as compeers on His throne.

We read, and are assured, that Jesus, by eternal birth, is God of God, and very God of very God. But while we cannot dive into the depths, we bathe our souls in the refreshment of the surface. For hence it follows, that He is sufficient to deal with God and to satisfy God, and thus to save His people to the uttermost. We see not Melchizedek's cradle. But we distinctly see him man on earth. Eye-witnesses, who heard Jesus and handled Him, give testimony, that He, too, has tabernacled in our clay, and thus was qualified to shed His life-blood as our ransom.

In Melchizedek we find neither first nor last hours. No search can tell when he began or ceased to be. Here is Jesus. His age is one everlasting day. From eternity past to eternity to come, His being rolls in one unbroken stream. Before time was, His name is, "I am that I am." When time shall have run its course, His name is still, "I am that I am."

Reader! does such greatness fill you with tremblings of awe? Do you sigh, How can I draw near? How can I cast myself into His arms? Behold Him! His eternal being is eternal love. He never lived, He never will live, but with His people engraven on His heart, and spread before His eye. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you." Zion's walls are continually before Him. Immeasurableness encourages, for it is immeasurableness of tender grace.

Melchizedek! How mighty is this name! He that utters it, says, "King of Righteousness." Who can claim that title, in its full purport, but Jesus? What is His person, what His work, but the glory of Righteousness? Since Adam fell, earth has seen no Righteousness apart from Him. But His kingdom is first Righteousness, then Peace. There is a throne in it righteously erected to dispense Righteousness. All the statutes, decrees, ordinances, every precept, every reward, every penalty--is a sunbeam of Righteousness. Each subject is bright in royal robes of purity--each wears a crown of Righteousness. Each delights in Righteousness, as his new-born nature.

Reader! do you not long to be righteous, even as He is righteous? There is one way--only one. Cleave to Jesus. His Spirit-giving scepter will kill in you the love of sin, and plant in you the living seeds of Righteousness. Melchizedek was a local monarch. His city was graced with the name of Salem, which is Peace. The war which stalked through the land, troubled not these tranquil citizens. Here again we have the sweet emblem of Jesus' blissful reign. His kingdom is one atmosphere of peace--one haven of unruffled calm. Heaven is at peace with the inhabitants. Sin had rebelled. It had aroused most holy wrath. It had armed each attribute of God with anger. It had unsheathed the sword of vengeance. It had pointed the arrows of destruction against our world of transgression. But Jesus cleanses His flock from every stain of evil. He is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." The eye of God can no more find the cause of antagonism. A flood of smiles descends upon the blood shed kingdom. The inhabitants are at

peace with heaven.

Sin had filled them with hatred of God's holiness--dread of God's avenging arm--aversion to God's presence. But Jesus, by His Spirit, plucks out the heart of stone, and implants a heart of filial love. The one delight is now to draw near to God--to walk by His side--to listen to His voice--to sing His praise. The inhabitants are at peace within. The sight of the cross stills each rising storm of conscience, and stifles the accusing voice of Satan. They see a divine Redeemer quenching by His blood the flames of hell--building by His merits the palace of heaven. Trouble vanishes before this morning star.

Reader! there is no peace but in this Salem. But within these walls there is one song of perfect peace. The gates are yet wide open. The Prince of Peace calls to His standard. Blessed, blessed are they, who hear, and hasten, and are at rest!

Melchizedek is called to the most hallowed functions. He is the consecrated priest of the most high God. As king, he sat above men. As priest, he stands before God. This holy office exhibits Jesus. He spurns no office which can serve the Church. The entrance of sin calls for expiation. No sinner can approach a sin-hating God without a sin-removing plea. This expiation can only be by the death of an appeasing victim. The victim can only die by a sacrificing hand. Hence we need a Priest to celebrate the blood-stained rite. And all which is needed, we have in Jesus. Cry out and shout, O happy believer, your "Christ is all." An altar is upraised. The altar is Christ. No other can suffice. He alone can bear the victim, which bears His people's sins. A lamb is led forth. The lamb is Christ. None other has blood of merit co-equal with man's guilt. Jesus, therefore, God in essence, man in person, extends Himself upon the accursed tree. But who is the Priest who dares approach a super-human altar? Who has a hand to touch a victim-God? The very sight would shiver man into annihilation. Therefore Jesus is the Priest. But can He slay Himself?

Reader! God's will is His nature. Love for His people is His heart. He looks to God--He looks to His Church, and counts it joy to give His blood. Believer, open wide your eyes of faith--gaze on this glorious work of your glorious High Priest. He spares not Himself, that all who flee to Him might be spared forever. But mark it well, the Lamb has died once and forever. The Priest's work on earth is finished once and forever. The shadows are passed away. The one Priest entered with His own blood into the holy of holies, having obtained eternal redemption. Will any now speak of priests, and altars, and sacrifices on earth? Let them beware. Let them consider. It is no light matter to trifle with the Spirit's language, and the names of Jesus. What begins in ignorance may end in death. "It is finished," is gloriously inscribed on the Priest's work below. "It never ceases," is as gloriously written on the work above. Jesus lives and His office lives!

Believer, behold Him on the right hand of the Majesty on High. He appears in priestly vesture. The names of the true Israel are on His shoulders--a token that all His strength is theirs to uphold them. The names are on His breast--a token that, while His heart beats, it beats for them. The voice of His pleading ever sounds and ever prevails. Father, forgive them; and they are forgiven. Father, have mercy on them; and mercies speed on rapid wing. The incense of His intercession ever rises. Father, bless them; and they are blessed. Father, smile on them; and it is light around. With extended hand, He takes their every offering of prayer, and praise, and service. He perfumes all with the rich fragrance of His merits. He makes all worthy in His own worthiness, and thus our nothingness gains great reward.

Melchizedek meets Abraham with bread and wine. The weary warrior is way-worn and faint. Refreshment is provided. The Lord is very tender of His people's needs. Dreadful is the curse on the Ammonites and

the Moabites, because they did not meet Israel with bread and water in the way, when they came forth out of Egypt. Here again we see our great High Priest. With God-like bounty, He bestows every supply, which wasted strength, and sinking spirits, and failing heart require. The fight of faith is fierce--the journey of life oftentimes seems long--but at every step a banquet-house is open, and refreshing delights are spread.

There is the solid sustenance of the Word: there are the overflowing cups of the promises: there is the abundant feast of holy ordinances, as manna from the hand of God: there is the spiritual food of His own body given--of His own blood shed. Our true Melchizedek invites us to draw near. And while we regale in soul-reviving faith, the gracious voice still sounds, "Blessed be Abraham by the most High God." The Patriarch, in grateful reverence, makes an offering of a tenth part of all. O my soul, what will you render to your great High Priest? Let your adoring language be, O Lord, I am Yours! You have bought me by Your blood! You have won me by Your melting grace! You have called me by Your constraining voice! You have subdued me by Your all-conquering Spirit. I am Yours! My soul is Yours to adore You! My heart is Yours to love You! My body is Yours to serve You! My tongue is Yours to praise You! My life is Yours to glorify You! My eternity is Yours to gaze on You--to follow You--to hymn Your name. But Eternity! Eternity! Eternity is too scanty for a redeemed soul to magnify a redeeming Jesus!

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