

Abram and the King of Righteousness

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[0 : 00] Genesis chapter 14.

Now, you're welcome to use one of the church Bibles that we have scattered around in the chairs.! Those might actually be easier for you to find the passages. So, for instance, this morning we will be in two primary passages.

! Only Genesis 14, but also Hebrews chapter 7. And so if you're using one of the church Bibles that we have scattered throughout the chairs, for Genesis you just turn to page 10, and then for the passage in Hebrews turn to page 1004.

So we're on both ends of the Bible here. We're going to be on page 10 and page 104. And I'd like you all to stand as we read from God's Word this morning, beginning first with Genesis 14, starting in verse 17 down through the end.

After his return from the defeat of Keter-la-omer 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.

[1 : 09] And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram by God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.

And blessed be God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. And the king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted my hand to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich.

I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre take their share. Now if you would flip over to Hebrews chapter 7, that's page 1004 in your church Bibles, beginning in verse 1 there.

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. And to him Abraham apportioned a tenth of everything.

[2 : 19] He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness. And then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.

Father, we give you thanks for your word this morning. We pray in Christ's name, amen. You guys take a seat. All of us have people in our lives that have been influential over us.

They have had a marked influence over us. So probably for almost everyone in here, if not everyone in here, we would say that our parents had a formative influence that will never go away. Even if that influence was for the bad, and you've had to overcome some of your childhood trauma, nevertheless, you would have to look and say that your parents had a very large influence over you and over the person that you are today.

Of course, we would also want to say that our spouses have a major impact upon us. If you've been married for more than just a couple of years, if you can look back 10 or 20 or 30 years over your marriage, you will notice that because, directly because of your relationship with your wife or with your husband, you are different now than you were when you were first married.

[3 : 40] Both of you change one another. You begin to share some of the other's characteristics and share some of their likes and dislikes, things that before were not a concern to you. At times, we will even completely change our thoughts and opinions on certain matters.

So, for instance, I am, by nature, disgusting. I am. I am a slob. There's nothing positive that I can say about the way that I like, that I would naturally, on my own, maintain the area that surrounds me

or the area in which I live.

For proof of that, any of you could go and try to find someone that I knew when I was in college who had been to my apartment, and that would serve as definitive proof that I am, at nature, at core, a disgusting person.

I'm just messy and gross, and it doesn't bother me one bit at all. Or at least, it used to not bother me. But Allie's very organized, and she's very clean, and over the years, I've become accustomed to a certain level of cleanliness so that now, with no prompting whatsoever, without anyone saying anything to me, I will randomly mop the kitchen floor because it's driving me insane, and we have four children who, for whatever reason, this week decided they were going to eat an entire box of Fruity Pebbles, which are just tiny, even more sugary Rice Krispies, and they're everywhere, and they're colored, and it was driving me insane.

That would not have bothered me 20 or 25 years ago. But now, this week, I found myself, hands and knees, wiping up places where it had gotten discolored on the floor, it was driving me insane. [5 : 17] And I finally, by the end of the week, I said, I've never buy it again. Never asked me for this cereal ever again. In fact, I rule out all cereals that have an excess amount of sugar. No Fruity Pebbles, no Fruit Loops, no Lucky Charms, nothing that might stick to the countertop or the floor.

20 years ago, all of my food would have been stuck to the countertop and the floor. But I have been changed, and I probably would say for the better in that area of my life because I married someone who's much cleaner and much neater than I am.

On the other hand, she's been changed as well. She's very organized. All of our dishes have a rightful place. Do not put the red bowls in the cabinet with the white bowls.

They're different. They're not only a different color, they're a different style of bowl, and they go in this cabinet over here. And so things are very well organized, which makes it easy to find things, of course.

But I'm not organized. Even here in this area, that has not changed for me. I am incredibly disorganized. So that how has she changed? Well, she hasn't lost her organization, but finally she conceded and said, you get one junk drawer in every room of the house.

[6 : 32] Because prior to that, every drawer that opened became a junk drawer. And if you don't know what a junk drawer is, it's just where you throw anything that you happen to pick up. Because that's how I clean. I just shove things in places.

If it's not visible, it does not exist. That's how it works in my head, okay? Before, it was all visible and everywhere. Now I shove things and hide things, which doesn't go well with a high level of organization.

But she conceded after several years and said, you get one junk drawer in every room, the rest stay organized. So there's been a little bit of shifting there as well. And that's what happens in marriage. Over time, we affect one another and we change one another. And so you can probably very easily point out the people in your life who've had the most influence on you, who've had the greatest effect upon who you are, because they're the people that are the most involved in your life and that you've been around for the most amount of time.

But then there are other people who come into our lives in a very fleeting manner, and yet they have a lasting impact upon us. There are people who are perhaps in our lives for only a moment, and yet what happens in that moment changes us or contributes something to us or perhaps even changes the course of our lives.

[7 : 50] It could be just a stranger who showed you some sort of act of kindness and you don't even know their name, but you know that you can point back to that moment and it shifted you, it changed you, it changed the course of your life, it changed a lot of things for you.

Or it may be some preacher whose name you don't remember, and yet as he preached the Gospel, the Spirit worked upon you and you came to believe in the Gospel. And you don't know his name, you don't know if he's still alive today, but you would say that God worked through him to work within you a great change in your life.

Well, this morning I believe that we're going to be taking a look at someone who in the course of what we might call redemptive history, that is simply a term that we use to describe God's act of saving His people throughout time, who in the course of redemptive history appears as sort of a blip on the radar.

In fact, the person that we're looking at this morning, his name is only mentioned one other time in the entire Old Testament in one single verse. And yet as we come to the New Testament and we go

to the book of Hebrews and we reflect and we look back upon this individual, we find that he's not a mere blip on the radar.

He may not be mentioned very often. He may not figure as one of the main characters of the biblical story that you learn about in Sunday school, yet he is significant. He is highly significant and important.

[9 : 13] And understanding who he is and what he did contributes greatly, I believe, to our understanding of what God is doing, not only in the life of Abraham, who we've been looking at and studying for the last couple of months, but also to the big picture of the biblical story of redemption that is revealed to us in the Scriptures.

You can see his name there in Genesis chapter 14 at the very end. He comes onto the scene sort of unexpectedly. We saw last week and we looked last week at the battle that Abram fought against these eastern kings who had come as invaders into the land of Canaan.

They had come with a powerful army and with a large army and they had defeated the Dead Sea kings, the kings of those cities, Sodom and Gomorrah and their allies. They had easily defeated them, easily defeated these other powerful groups and tribes on their way to defeat them.

And yet, Abram rises up with his trained men and with his allies and he chases these powerful kings out of the land of Canaan, even going so far as to recapture all the things that they had taken from the cities that they had captured in the land of Canaan.

So Abram is coming off of a great military victory. And then at the end, there's this strange story about Abram's interaction with one of the kings whose goods he had secured, one of the kings who had been defeated by the eastern kings and now Abram has gotten his stuff back, but then another king who just appears on the scene here in Genesis 14 and then we don't hear from him again in the story.

[10 : 54] His name is Melchizedek. Take a look. You can see he's there in verse 18. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine.

He was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him. That is, he blessed Abram and said, Blessed be Abram by God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High who has delivered you from your enemies into his hand.

And then we're told that Abram gave a tenth. That is a tithe of everything. All of the goods that he had captured from these kings, he gave a tenth of it to this king who we know nothing about other than what is revealed right here in Genesis 14.

That is, until we move further into the Old Testament. I said that he's mentioned one other time in the Old Testament, and that's in the book of Psalms. I'd like you to hold your place in Genesis and turn over to Psalm 110.

It's on page 509 in our church Bibles. In Psalm 110, we find the only other mention of Melchizedek in the entire Old Testament.

[12 : 03] Psalm 110 is a psalm that is written by King David. So we've moved forward several centuries from Abraham to the time of King David. We're much later removed now.

We're later on in time. This is a psalm written by King David. And it's introduced in a very interesting way. King David says at the very beginning of this psalm, the Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

So David is conceiving of God, that's the all caps Lord, God speaking to someone who qualifies as David's Lord. Someone who is over and above and greater than the King of Israel.

You come to the New Testament, Jesus makes it clear that David was looking into the future and he was speaking of his own descendant, Jesus Christ himself, who is in reality David's Lord.

But he speaks to him and he says in verse 2, the Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies. Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power in holy garments.

[13 : 11] From the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. All this is about Jesus in the distant future from David. It's all about Jesus. But then notice what we read in verse 4.

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You, that is the coming Messiah, Jesus himself, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

There he is. Finally, again, he comes on the scene in the Old Testament and now we have King David looking ahead to another king in the future who would also be a priest and he is, as David testifies, he is made by God a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

So now Melchizedek takes on a new level of importance because now we recognize, now we realize that he is part of a priestly class.

He is part of a category of priests and the only other member of that category that we know of is Jesus Christ, the future king from the line of David, at least from David's perspective.

[14:20] He is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Now that particular verse from Psalm 110 is quoted repeatedly in the book of Hebrews.

So I want you to turn there. You should already have it marked with your finger. You were there earlier. It's page 1004. I want you to turn over to Hebrews and it's here in Hebrews that we get a glimpse into and we begin to learn more about who this Melchizedek is and why he is so important. He's not just another one of those strange, weird names from the Old Testament that we can read past and then quickly forget about. Yes, it's a strange, weird name, but he is significant.

And so I want us to take a look this morning primarily at Hebrews chapter 7 so that we can understand in a better way what is happening when Melchizedek shows up on the scene.

Who is this guy? Why does he matter? Now before we can even dip into chapter 7 very well, I need to dispel what is a very common I believe misunderstanding of who Melchizedek is.

[15:31] Some people have thought and have proposed that Melchizedek is actually Jesus himself or God the Son appearing before he was born in Bethlehem, appearing as a man in the Old Testament period to come and bless Abram.

So that they would say, they would call this a, the technical term for it is a Christophany. That is an appearance of Christ before his incarnation, before he was born in Bethlehem.

That's a very popular interpretation of who Melchizedek happens to be, but I think that there are good reasons from Hebrews for rejecting that particular interpretation.

One of the primary reasons for rejecting that interpretation and saying that Melchizedek is Jesus is the simple fact that in order for Jesus to act as a priest in an effective way, he has to be fully human.

He can't merely appear to be a human being. He must be a human being. That's why he was born in Bethlehem. That's why he took upon himself a human nature so that he could stand in our place, so that he could represent us, and so that he could intercede on our behalf.

[16:49] That's what a priest does. That's the duty. That's the job of a priest. A priest represents God's people and goes before God on their behalf. And one of the primary reasons that Jesus came into the world was so that he might go to God on our behalf and intercede for us.

But a priest can only intercede on behalf of those from whom he comes. In other words, you need a human being to represent human beings in the presence of God.

And prior to his incarnation, before he was born in Bethlehem, God the Son was not fully human. Even if you argue that he temporarily took upon himself a human body in Genesis chapter 14, he wouldn't be fully human at that point.

He needs to be born into the world. He needs to fully take on human nature. And Melchizedek in Genesis 14 is functioning fully as a priest. If that were some sort of appearance of Jesus where he merely appeared to be human or temporarily took upon himself a human body, he would not be able to act as a priest.

He wouldn't be able to bless Abram and he certainly would not be able to receive Abram's tithes on behalf of God himself. He wouldn't be able to do that because he wouldn't be fully human.

[18:08] Not yet. Now where do I get that from? I get that from Hebrews chapter 2. You can just turn back a page in your Bible. Hebrews chapter 2 tells us why Jesus, why God the Son became a human being.

Verse 14, Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself, that's Jesus, he likewise partook of the same things so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Now move down to verse 17. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

In order for Jesus to die on behalf of God's people, he must be one of them. He must be a human being. And in order for Jesus to offer himself up as a priest would offer up an offering, and in order for Jesus to intercede on behalf of his people, he needs to fully become like his brothers in every

respect, yet without sin we are told later in Hebrews.

So Jesus, in order to function as a priest, has to be fully human. And in Genesis chapter 14, he has not yet taken flesh upon himself. Not in the full sense that we see happening in Matthew chapter 1 or in Luke chapter 2.

[19 : 40] He must fully take upon himself flesh. So for that reason, I would say that we should not view Melchizedek as some sort of appearance of Jesus before his incarnation.

But there are reasons that are perhaps a little bit more easy to see and a little bit more obvious in Hebrews chapter 7. Let me point simply two of them out to you. Look down in verse 3 which we read earlier.

In verse 3, this is what we are told about Melchizedek. That he resembles the Son of God. You see that? But resembling the Son of God, he continues as a priest forever.

So Melchizedek resembles the Son of God. He isn't the Son of God, but he resembles. That is, he points toward and in many ways he is like the Son of God, but he's not the Son of God.

And then we get it from the other direction if you go all the way down to verse 15. Now we are told in verse 15 that Jesus is in the likeness of Melchizedek.

[20 : 42] Verse 15, this becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek. So Melchizedek resembles the Son of God and Jesus is in the likeness of Melchizedek, but they are not one and the same.

So if this is not an appearance of Jesus before his incarnation, who is this Melchizedek guy? Who is he? What is he doing? What's happening here? Well, there's a technical term that I think that you need to know in order for us to fully grasp who this Melchizedek is.

And that technical term is typology. All right? Typology. T-Y-P-ology. Typology. All right? Now I try not, generally speaking, I try not to introduce to you too many technical terms as I'm preaching to you.

That's because this is not a lecture. This is not a seminary classroom. This is not a college class where you come in to receive knowledge and then you just go home. That's not what's happening up here.

That's not the purpose of this. This is, yes, I am teaching. Yes, I am explaining the Scriptures to you. But not simply so that you can take information in. Not simply so that you can grow smarter.

[21 : 55] No. We give you the Word of God and we explain the Word of God when we preach it so that you might be changed and transformed and ultimately so that you might better see Him for who He is.

The goal of every sermon that is preached ought to be to enable the people who are listening to see glory more clearly. This is not about information for information's sake.

This is about helping you to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ. So I try to avoid introducing technical terminology simply to make you feel as if you are smarter.

But there are occasions when it's helpful, when we see that there are reasons that this terminology has been created by theologians. It helps us to wrestle with things and understand things.

So what we are seeing here is something that we call typology. Typology is something that indicates that there is a person, a place, or a thing in the Old Testament that is pointing forward to and is in some ways like a person, place, or thing in the New Testament.

[23 : 05] So it is someone or something in the Old Testament that's supposed to remind us of or point us toward someone or something in the New Testament.

And there are some similarities between them and yet that person or thing in the New Testament is a much greater fulfillment of those characteristics that they happen to share.

Let me give you a couple of examples here that are probably easy to see that you may have heard of before. So in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the Apostle Paul refers to Jesus as the last Adam.

The last Adam. As in, He's like Adam. He's another Adam. How is He like Adam? He's like Adam in that He represents all those who are joined to Him.

Adam, all those who are descended from Him, all those whom He represents when He sinned, they were condemned to death because of His sin. And Jesus, being a kind of Adam, being the last Adam, being another Adam, also represents the people of God.

[24 : 11] And yet, instead of sinning, Jesus lives a completely righteous life so that all those whom He represents, they get counted as completely righteous in Him.

So we say that Adam is a type of Christ. He's pointing us toward someone in the New Testament who shares certain characteristics with Him, but who is better than Him, who perhaps succeeds where he fails or more completely reveals what is only slightly revealed in the type.

Another example of this might be King David. King David points ahead to Jesus as well. He is the king over God's people. He is the rightful heir to the throne.

He is the rightful ruler of all of God's people. And when we look at David, we are seeing in many ways a picture of who Christ is to be. And so there are times when we read through the Psalms and we read some that David wrote and it appears as though David is saying things about himself that simply cannot be true of a mere human being.

And yet, he's looking ahead to the fulfillment. He's looking ahead to what we call the anti-type. He is the type and there is a better version in Christ.

[25 : 25] Or if you want someone other than a person, you might look at, for instance, the temple. The temple in the Old Testament was the place where God dwelt. That's where God met with His people. But when you arrive at the New Testament in John 1, verse 14, we are told that the Word, that is Jesus, became flesh and literally what it says is He tabernacled among us.

That is, He became a kind of temple among us. And even Jesus Himself identifies His body with the temple of God. So that the temple is the type and the fulfillment or the anti-type is Jesus.

The temple was the place in the Old Testament where God met with His people, but Jesus actually is God in the flesh meeting with His people, coming to them.

So we have these places where we have a type in the Old Testament, either a person or a thing, pointing towards some greater fulfillment, the anti-type in the New Testament.

And you can see that there's a theme that many, many times the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament type is Jesus Himself. Well, that's what we're finding here with Melchizedek.

[26 : 33] Melchizedek is not the pre-incarnate Christ, but Melchizedek is meant to point us toward Jesus. So that there are some significant ways in which Melchizedek is like Jesus.

And those are the things that are highlighted in Hebrews chapter 7 and that I want us to take a quick notice of today. Remember, always with the goal of helping us to see glory.

So as we look at these things, I hope that your eyes are open and you can see the glory of Jesus a little more clearly. The first two things that I want us to see are mentioned very closely together and they actually prepare us for the last two or the other two things that I want us to notice from chapter 7.

But if you'll jump in, in the middle of verse 2 in chapter 7, we read this, that Melchizedek is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness.

And then, he is king of Salem, that is, king of peace. So the very name and title of Melchizedek is a clue to ways in which he is like Jesus.

[27 : 39] His name literally means king of righteousness. Melchi is king of. Zedek is righteousness. So he is the king of righteousness.

That's who he is. And that's who Jesus is. Jesus is the rightful king from the line of David. He is even rightfully the ruler of God's people from Jerusalem in a very real sense.

The city of Salem is the city of Jerusalem before its name was changed. Jesus is the true king. And he is ultimately the righteous one, the righteous ruler of God's people.

That's who he is. But he is also the king of peace. The word Salem is closely related to the Hebrew word shalom. And so he is Melchizedek quite literally the king of peace.

That's what his city was called. And now we look to Jesus. He is in fact the king of peace. He is the one who has broken down the dividing wall. He is the one who through his blood has made peace between us and God.

[28 : 45] Paul says that we were formerly apart from Christ, we were God's enemies. By the way, that's who you are if you have not trusted in Jesus. If you don't have a personal relationship with him, if you've not turned from your sin and put your faith and your hope in him, then you are right now currently an enemy of God.

People don't like to think of themselves as that way. They think, I don't have a problem with God.

I'm okay with God. I believe in God. That's not the issue. The issue is not whether or not you've got a problem with God.

The issue is that he's got a problem with you and with me. That we are fallen, sinful people and God is holy and just. He is, as we just said, righteous and he does execute judgment upon all those who

deserve it and that is you and me.

We deserve it. We are quite naturally God's enemies whether we know it or not. And yet Jesus has come into the world to bring peace where there was enmity.

He has come in to establish an armistice. A permanent, a permanent armistice. A permanent, permanent ceasing of the hostility between us and God Himself.

[30 : 00] He is the King of peace. He's the King of righteousness. He is the King of peace. But in a greater way than Melchizedek could have ever been.

What else does he share in common with Melchizedek? Well, we see that Melchizedek in Genesis chapter 14 is the one through whom blessing comes to Abram.

God in Genesis chapter 12 promised that He would bless Abram. And while God has in ways blessed Abram, He has even despite Abram's foolishness at times brought blessing into Abram's life.

Genesis 14 is the first time that we actually see the word bless used to describe anything that is done to Abram since the promise was given. And it is Melchizedek who blesses him.

It is through Melchizedek that the blessing on Abram from God comes to him. And now ultimately we find that the blessing promised to Abraham and to all of his descendants comes only in and through Jesus.

[31 : 08] Take a look there at the text. Verse 6. I'm sorry. Down in verse 4. See how great this man was.

That's Melchizedek. To whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils. He's great, he's saying. And those descendants of Levi who received the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take their tithes from the people that is from their brothers.

Though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man does not have his descent from them. But he received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

Now note this in verse 7. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.

The inferior is blessed by the superior. So what the writer of Hebrews is saying is that there's a very real sense in which Melchizedek is superior to Abraham.

[32 : 11] Now how does this tie into Jesus? Look all the way down in verse 22. This, now what does this refer back to? Well, in the previous verse it's Psalm 110.4 again.

The Lord is sworn and will not change His mind. You are a priest forever. So, so first we have He's a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Now, verse 22, this makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

In other words, Jesus is the one through whom the blessing flows, but in a more full, in a more complete way than it ever could have through Melchizedek.

You want to see this very clearly? Turn over in your Bibles to the book of Galatians. Turn over to Galatians chapter 3, if you would. chapter 3, it's page 973 in the church Bibles.

In Galatians chapter 3, we're going to jump in in verse 7. We're going to jump in in verse 7. Paul says, Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham and the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, now here's the promise again, in you shall all the nations be blessed.

[33 : 34] Verse 9, So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. So now the blessing promised to Abraham is made available to more people.

Not just Abraham and his physical descendants, but he says, to all those who are of the faith of Abraham. Everyone who trusts in Christ receives the blessing of Abraham.

That's very clear in verse 14. Where he says, in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles. In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles.

How does Jesus guarantee a better covenant? How does Jesus more fully bring in the promises made to Abraham? Because all those who trust in Christ receive the blessing of Abraham.

Jesus doesn't merely bless Abraham. He blesses all those who by faith have become the sons of Abraham. He is superior and he is better than Melchizedek.

[34 : 41] And then lastly, the last thing I want you to see in terms of Jesus' relation to Melchizedek has to do with his priesthood. So Melchizedek is the king of righteousness as is Jesus.

Melchizedek is the king of peace as is Jesus. Melchizedek is the one through whom blessing comes to Abraham as is Jesus. And Melchizedek is a good and faithful priest that is mediator between God and man as is Jesus.

Now, in reality, all of chapter 7 is about this. In fact, all of chapters 5 and 6 and 7 and 8 are really about how Jesus is a better priest than all the priests of the Old Testament. About how Jesus is superior to all of them. So we could really almost jump in anywhere we want and see Jesus described as the better, the full, the complete high priest over his people. But we're not going to do that and we're not going to spend the next hour studying Hebrews chapter 7. Instead, I simply want you to jump down to verse 11. Now, if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, pause, another term that you might be unfamiliar with. [36 : 01] What's a Levitical priesthood? Well, after the time of Abram, Abram's descendants multiplied, of course. They went to Egypt where they multiplied even more. And then you know perhaps the story of Moses who led God's people out of Egypt and back into the promised land where Abram is in Genesis chapter 14.

And on the way back to the promised land, of course, God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai to Moses and gave to Moses a number of commandments. We typically think, oh, He gave them the Ten Commandments. Well, that's right, but that's only ten out of over 600 commandments that God gave to Moses on the mountain. And among those commandments were a lot of rules and regulations for how Israel, how the people of God, would approach God. How they could have a relationship with God. But all of that needed to happen according to the commandments that God gave to Moses through priests, through men appointed by God to represent God's people before Him in the temple or in the tabernacle. That's how it was supposed to happen. And all of the priests, God said, were supposed to be descendants of Levi. Levi is one of the twelve tribes of Israel. [37 : 15] He is one of the sons of the grandson of Abraham. And so God says, I want all the priests to come from the tribe of Levi. They can't come from some other tribe.

They can't come from anywhere else. They must come from the tribe of Levi. And then even further, God says, I want them all to come from Aaron. Aaron was Moses' brother and Moses and Aaron were Levites. They were from the tribe of Levi. And God says, I want all the priests to come from Aaron within the tribe of Levi. And that's what you have throughout the history of Israel. You have this line of succession of all of these priests, all of them descendants of Levi, all of them descendants of Aaron, all of them rightful inheritors of the charge to be priests and representatives of God's people to God. All of them. But they're not perfect. In fact, one of the greatest problems with this priesthood is that the priests themselves are sinners. So the priest, first he has to go and make an offering for his own sin. [38 : 20] Then he can make an offering for the sin of the people. But then you have to replace the priest all the time because priests are just human beings and they die and they're gone. So the Levitical priesthood is not perfect.

It has some problems. Which is what we're seeing in verse 11. Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek rather than one named after the order of Aaron? Now here he's reflecting back on Psalm 110. In Psalm 110 David looked into the future, saw a future king of Israel and said, he will be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. So the writer of Hebrews is saying, why did David even say that? Why did God reveal that to David? Why does God say it's necessary for another kind of priest to arrive? You've got the Levites, you've got the descendants of Aaron, isn't that everything that you need? Apparently not. Because God already said after he'd established the Levitical priesthood, years later, centuries later, God has said, another priest will arise. [39 : 38] And he won't be from the tribe of Levi. In fact, he will be a priest like Melchizedek. So Jesus, like Melchizedek, is a priest.

But because he is a different kind of priest, because he is a priest not from the line of Levi, he is superior not only to Melchizedek, but to all of the priests of the Old Testament. Let's continue reading and see how this is described. verse 13, for the one of whom these things are spoken, belonged to another tribe from which no one has ever served at the altar.

The one of whom these things are spoken is Jesus. Psalm 110 is about Jesus. And he says, but he's not from the tribe of Levi. No, we know in fact that he's from the tribe of Judah. Verse 14, for it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah. Judah. And in connection with that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests. See the argument that he's building here? [40 : 43] He's saying there was a priest king promised who would be like Melchizedek from the line of David. But David's from the tribe of Judah.

Therefore, Jesus is from the tribe of Judah. And Moses didn't say anything about any priests coming from the tribe of Judah. So what's going on in Psalm 110? What's happening? Why are these things happening? Now jump in in verse 15. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

For it is witnessed of him, you are a priest forever. Mark that word forever. Remember, one of the problems, one of the imperfections of the priesthood established in the law given to Moses is that they die.

They die and they have to be replaced. But Jesus, after dying, rose and he lives and reigns forever, which is exactly what was promised in Psalm 110.

[41 : 51] He would be a priest forever. He wouldn't stay dead. He would be able to remain and to continue to function as a mediator between God and man for all time.

that's what Jesus does and in that he is in some ways similar to Melchizedek. How, you say? Go back to verse 3. Now we're talking about Melchizedek again.

Melchizedek is without father or mother or genealogy. Now pause there. Melchizedek obviously had a mom and a dad, right?

We know how these things work. People don't just grow out of the ground, right? He had a mother and he had a father. But unlike the priests of the Levitical priesthood, whose line of descent, whose genealogy was carefully and meticulously recorded over the centuries so that they could make sure that they had the right people serving as priests, when you jump in Genesis chapter 14, it's like I said earlier, he comes on the scene, he disappears.

No account of his birth, no account of his family, we don't know anything about his genealogy. So there's no genealogy recorded for him. We don't know who his parents were. We don't know anything else about him.

[43 : 06] He's not of the rightful line, just like Jesus, not of the rightful line to serve as priest. Having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.

His birth isn't recorded, and his death is not recorded. We don't know those things. And just as in a literary sense, we have no birth or death for Melchizedek.

Literally, yes, he was born and he died. But from the record of the Bible, we have no record of that. From a literary sense, he has no birth or death. So now, the one who fulfills what Melchizedek was pointing to, literally remains alive forever.

He remains and continues as a priest forever. Verse 24, he, Jesus, holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever.

And because of that, consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

[44 : 14] Jesus is superior to all other priests, Melchizedek included, because he always lives to intercede on behalf of God's people. And here's what that means practically for you.

Every time you pray, if you are a believer in Jesus, Jesus himself delivers your prayers to the Father. You want to know, does he hear you?

Does he know? Yeah. Yeah, he does. Because you have one who never, ever stops interceding for you. You have one who is always, always going before the Father and pleading your case.

And not only your prayers, but he is forever pleading the efficacy of his own blood on your behalf. Forever offering up and saying, I've given my life for this one.

I died for him. I died for her. My blood was shed for them. Forever. He never stops interceding on behalf of his people.

[45 : 16] And therefore, his people's prayers will always be heard and their sins will never condemn them. This is good news.

Jesus is like Melchizedek. He is, in a sense, another Melchizedek. But he is far greater. He is far superior. We can trust and know that because he is the king of righteousness, he stands as a righteous and sinless priest to offer up a perfect, sinless sacrifice on our behalf. We can know because he is the king of peace that he will always and forever faithfully intercede for us, pleading his own blood to absorb and remove the wrath of God on our behalf so that the enmity is forever gone and erased. He is a good king and he is a good priest and you should trust in him. Let's pray. Let's pray.