

The High Priest Forever

Key Verse: “*He, on account of his continuing for the age, possesses the priesthood which changes not.*”

—**Hebrews 7:24,**
*Wilson’s Emphatic
Diaglott*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 7:1-3,19-28

Melchisedec was both a king and a priest, and, from God’s standpoint, he was very highly honored. Indeed, even Abraham, who was called “the Friend of God,” and whose faith was “imputed unto him for righteousness,” paid tithes to Melchisedec, and was blessed by him.—James 2:23; Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1,2

The name Melchisedec, as it is rendered in the New Testament, comes from two Hebrew words: *melek*, which means king, and *tsedeq*, which means righteousness. Melchisedec was “King of Salem,” which means peace. Thus, Paul calls him both a “King of righteousness” and a “King of peace.” He was, Paul continues, “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. 7:2,3)

AS NOTED IN OUR PREVIOUS lesson, Paul, in the Book of Hebrews, refers to Jesus as a “high priest after the order of Melchisedec.” (Heb. 5:10; 6:20) In the seventh chapter many things are shown about Melchisedec which prove him to be a type of Christ. The Melchisedec priesthood, both typical and anti-typical, is much greater in every way, than the Aaronic priesthood.

He was “without father, . . . mother,” and “descent” in the sense that he did not inherit the priestly office through family lineage, but it was given to him directly by God.

During the Jewish Age, God instructed Israel that their priests were to be taken from the tribe of Levi. However, God also had authority to exalt others to this office. He did so in the case of Melchisedec, and also with Christ, the antitypical Melchisedec. In the Aaronic order of priesthood there was a line of succession through direct descendants, but not so in the higher arrangement. Melchisedec had neither predecessor nor successor in his priestly office. In this respect, he was “like unto the Son of God,” Christ Jesus, who similarly is the only one in this highest of all priestly orders, and remains a “high priest for ever.”—Heb. 6:20

The Israelites were long accustomed to look to the Aaronic priesthood as the channel through which they would worship God and receive his instructions. However, Christ Jesus is high priest of a new order of priesthood, and his faithful footstep followers of the present Gospel Age will join him in this new arrangement. The work of this higher Melchisedec is a future one of glory, when Jesus and his body members—the church—will be installed as kings and priests. In this exalted position, they will rule and instruct the world of mankind in righteousness.—Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6

It was not God’s intention to have the Law Covenant stand perpetually, nor to allow its Aaronic priesthood to continue forever. (Heb. 7:18-23) It was God’s purpose to appoint Jesus a higher order of priest, as well as a king, long before he came into the world to be man’s Redeemer. The prophecies of the Old Testament give us this assurance. (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4; Zech. 6:12,13) Let us look forward to the time when God’s “royal priesthood” will be the agency for bringing blessings to the world of mankind.—I Pet. 2:9; Acts 3:25 ■