

### **After the Similitude of Melchizedek**

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest." Hebrews 7:15

The dictionary defines similitude as a likeness or similarity, referring to a thing or sometimes a person that is like or the counterpart of another. According to the Encyclopedia of the Bible, similitude refers to comparison, copy, likeness, or agreement. In the context of Hebrews 7:15, similitude refers to likeness. The question then arises, how is Christ, "the other priest" of the similitude of Melchizedek? The similitude/likeness between Christ and Melchizedek lies in their roles as priests and kings. What is the significance of Him being a priest after the similitude of Melchizedek? Melchizedek's ancestry is unknown, and Christ's human ancestry is known; yet the Apostle tells us that Melchizedek is made like the Son of God, Christ Himself. How is Melchizedek like the Son of God, when the Son of God is of the similitude of Melchizedek?

Christ's questioning of the Jews in Matthew 22 can aid in our understanding of what appears to be a difficult scripture. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? Matthew 22:41-45. The Apostle says Christ is of the similitude of Melchizedek, and also that Melchizedek is made like unto the Son of God. What, therefore, are we to understand? The Apostle Peter tells us that Paul wrote things that are hard to understand (2 Peter 3:15-6). Is this one of the hard things that Peter is referencing? It therefore calls for wisdom to understand it.

Melchizedek is said to be made like the Son of God. How is this? Melchizedek, being a man, obviously had a beginning. The Son of God is verily God without a beginning. John 1:1-3; 10:30-33. For Melchizedek to be "made like the Son of God," it means that he possessed the life of God, which is without beginning or end. Melchizedek, being a king and priest of the Most High God, was born of the Spirit, born again, for only such have the life of God. John 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4. Only such persons can be priests of the Most High God, and hence, having the divine nature/life of God, are made like the Son of God. It is not only Melchizedek who is made like the Son of God, but all of the redeemed of all ages are so made and will be priests and kings unto

God as was Melchizedek. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9-10.

"Christ's sacrifice in behalf of man was full and complete. The condition of the atonement had been fulfilled. The work for which He had come to this world had been accomplished. He had won the kingdom. He had wrested it from Satan and had become heir of all things. He was on His way to the throne of God, to be honored by the heavenly host." The Acts of the Apostles 29.2

## **The Order of Melchizedek**

### **Part 1**

The Bible first mentions the order of Melchizedek in the Psalms, but it is taken up exclusively in the book of Hebrews by the Apostle Paul. In the Book of Hebrews, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he teaches of this order in which Melchizedek was a priest. Quoting from Genesis and the Psalms, he identifies Melchizedek as a priest, and Christ as priest of this order. "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." Genesis 14:18. The initial reference to Christ as Priest after the order of Melchizedek is in Psalm 110:4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

While Melchizedek is called "priest of the Most High God, on the other hand, Christ, who is of the order of Melchizedek, is called High Priest. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." Hebrews 10:9-10. Further references to Christ as High Priest are: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Hebrews 3:1. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee." Hebrews 5:5. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God." Hebrews 10:19-21.

The fact that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek prompts us to consider not the man Melchizedek, but the order itself. But what is meant by the term order? According to the dictionary, it means to give an authoritative instruction to do something. "Order' in the context of Psalm 110:4, to which we are referring, is *dibrâ* (pronounced dib-raw'), which, according to the Hebrew (H1700) Strong's concordance, means cause, manner, or reason. According to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon, Psalm 110:4 means after the order or manner of Melchizedek. Contextually, here, it means manner. In what manner is Christ of the order of Melchizedek? The

order of Melchizedek is a kingly priesthood offering blessings and sacraments. Genesis 14:18-19. Christ must also provide the same as a priest/king after the order of Melchizedek.

The Greek word for "order" in the New Testament is *taxis* (G5010), according to Strong's Concordance. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says order as used in Book of Hebrews refers to the Divinely appointed character or nature of a priesthood, of Melchizedek, as foreshadowing that of Christ, Hbr 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11 (where also the character of the Aaronic priesthood is set in contrast); 7:17 (in some mss., ver. 21).

Of the character of the priesthood of both the Melchizedek and Aaronic orders, which God established, the Melchizedek priesthood is the superior, as it is everlasting. Christ, being "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek", therefore has an eternal priesthood, which is unlike the priesthood of the order of Aaron. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" Hebrews 7:11.

The question arises: When did Jesus become a priest? First, how did a person become a priest? In the Jewish economy, a person became a priest if they were born into the tribe of Levi and, more specifically, into the family of Aaron, Israel's first high Priest. "And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons." Exodus 29:2.

High priests had the responsibility of serving the people in offering their gifts and sacrifices to God. "For every high Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices—Hebrews 8:3 (first part). Christ, as a priest, but after the order of Melchizedek, provided better gifts and offerings when He offered Himself to God through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).

But when did He become a priest, seeing that the scriptures say He could not be such while on Earth. "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." Hebrews 8:4. This is the law of being a priest of the Aaronic/Levitical order. While on Earth, He could not be a priest or High Priest of the Levitical priesthood, as He was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah.

Moses anointed Aaron, the first Priest of Israel, and his sons at God's direction. "And he (Moses) poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him." Leviticus

8:12. "These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he (Moses) consecrated to minister in the priest's office." Numbers 3:3.

He who is of the order of Melchizedek, which is a divine, everlasting priesthood (Psalm 110:4), means that He was always a priest of God's appointment. At His baptism, the Holy Ghost resting upon Him testified to His appointment by anointing Him as evidence of His priestly work on the Earth. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38.