Hebrews 7:1-10 Inductive Bible Study Notes and Discussion Questions

Outline: Hebrews 7:1-10

I. Melchizedek’s background (1-3)

II. Melchizedek is greater than Abraham (4-10)

I. Verses 1-3

Discussion Questions

What is the significance that Melchizedek was king of righteousness and king of Salem?

What does it mean that he was without father or mother? Without genealogy?

Some argue that this indicates he was the pre-incarnate Christ. What do you think about this?

What differences are there between Aaron’s priesthood and Melchizedek’s?

Why would Moses not record more information about Melchizedek in the OT, considering that he is a rather important character?

Cross-References

Genesis 14:18-20, Psalm 110:4


Teaching Points

The author uses Melchizedek as a model of Christ’s priesthood, several times in this epistle saying that Christ is a priest “according to the order of Melchizedek.” Well, what was special about Melchizedek? And why was his priesthood superior? In this chapter the author compares Christ’s/Melchizedek’s priesthood with that of the Levites to further demonstrate Jesus’ superiority in all ways.

Abraham gave one tenth of all his spoils. See also verse 4 where it shows he gave of the choicest. This is one basis in the Bible for the so called 10% tithe. What does this show us about Melchizedek? What does this show us about Abraham? Should we also give ten percent? Should we give just if we have some extra or something leftover? Can you afford to give? (Mark 12:41-44) What should be the motivation? What kind of things should we give to? What if we don’t know where to give? Discuss.

He was king of righteousness. The time of Abraham was a dark, evil age. There was rampant idolatry. This idolatry led people into many horrible abominations. King Melchizedek’s righteous reign stood out light a lighthouse in the middle of a storm (just like Jesus who came as a light into a dark world). It is all the more mysterious since we know so little about it. How did he come to believe in the Most High God? How did God communicate with him? Did the people he ruled over also follow God? How long did this righteous kingdom last? Melchizedek is indeed a mysterious figure and we will never have the answer to these questions on earth. I do believe that this can teach us something about God,
However. This shows us that God’s work and plans are not limited to what we know or even limited to events in the Bible. God is a big God. At any time in history, and within any culture, God could have used divine means of revelation to communicate His truth and save people. He did this in the case of Melchizedek and he could have (we don’t know) done it other times as well.

He was king of peace. This is another clear correlation with Christ. See John 14:27. Jesus came to break down the barriers between us and God and bring peace to the world. As Melchizedek was appointed to bring peace to the world, so we are God’s ambassadors and charged to bring his message of peace to those around us. War, conflict, hatred, rivalry, selfish ambition and the like are all from the pit.

Verse 3 – This verse is a bit controversial. There are two basic interpretations.

It could mean that Melchizedek really had no parents and no beginning or end. This would mean that He must be God. And those who hold this view hold to the belief that he was the pre-incarnate Christ. However, the author never expressly says this. Instead he often says that Christ is of the order of Melchizedek. If He is Melchizedek, it would seem unlikely he would use this terminology. That would mean He is of the order of Himself.

The other interpretation is that he did have a mother and father, a birth and a death, like everyone else, but that these events are not recorded in his genealogy. This interpretation is supported by one translation in the Pehsitta which says “whose father and mother are not written in genealogies.” It is also supported by the literal translation of “made like the Son of God,” which literally means “made to be like the Son of God.” In other words, his background was specifically written in such a way that he would bear resemblance to Christ. Because we don’t know his background such as where he was from, who his parents were, where he was born, or where he died, He is a person of mystery. In history, he just seemingly appears out of nowhere for a short time and then disappears again. This is very much like Christ who appears on earth for a short time, completes his mission and goes back to heaven. His life being recorded in this way helps us to understand more about Christ’s life as the two are compared.

He remains a priest perpetually. Melchizedek was not a priest because of his lineage. He was a priest because God appointed him to this position. This is something like Samuel. Samuel was also not a Levite. But God chose him as his priest. God is not restrained by genealogies. He can of his own authority make a priest of anyone He chooses. Melchizedek gives a valid precedent for Christ being a priest. The Jews may very well have thought that only Levites could be priests. They would argue that Christ wasn’t a Levite and therefore He couldn’t be a priest. Melchizedek’s priesthood sinks this argument. What lesson can we learn from this?

God can do whatever He wants. He is only bound to His own character. He created the laws of nature, but sometimes he works outside of them. He established the Levitical priesthood, but He can override this at anytime. Certainly He cannot break His own character of holiness, justice, love, etc.

We learn that Christ is a priest perpetually. There is no record of Melchizedek’s death signifying the end of his priesthood as there is with Aaron. Also, Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension did not end his priesthood. He is still at the right hand of God interceding for and mediating for us.

II. Verses 4-10

Discussion Questions
What conclusion does the author make based on the fact that Abraham tithed to Melchizedek?

Which part of the spoils did Abraham give to Melchizedek? Why? What lesson can we learn from this?

What point is the author making in verses 5-6? What similarity is mentioned between Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood?

So from verse 7, who is greater? Why is this significant? How does this show the superiority of Christ? (Abraham/Levites < Melchizedek < Christ = Christ is supreme)

What does it mean that he lives on? (verse 8)

What conclusion does he reach in verse 9-10? What does this show us about Melchizdek and by extension, Christ?

**Cross-References**

Numbers 18:21-24 – Levites can collect a tithe from their countrymen.

**Teaching Points**

Abraham = Levites < Melchizedek – The main point of these verses is that Melchizedek is greater than the Levites. The purpose of proving this point is to show that the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to that of the Levites and therefore that Christ’s priesthood is better than that of the Levites. Remember that the author’s audience are Hebrews. They place great importance on their traditions and on the Old Testament laws. In their minds, only Levites could be priest and therefore Christ could not be a priest since He wasn’t a Levite. The author has shown conclusively that God can make anyone a priest whom He wants as He did with Melchizedek. So he has a step by step logical argument which he uses to prove that Melchizedek is greater than the Levitical priesthood. It goes like this:

Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek.

The Levites could also receive a one tenth tithe from the other Israelites.

Abraham was a representative of all the Israelites including the Levites because he was their ancestor.

Therefore through Abraham as their proxy the Levites tithed to Melchizedek.

The lesser tithes to the greater.

Therefore Melchizedek is greater than the Levites.

Choicest spoils – Notice how Abraham gave of the best of his spoils to Melchizedek. This is one of the earliest precedents in the Bible for giving of our best to God. Abraham often exhibited this unselfish nature such as in the case of giving the best of the land to Lot. How can we apply this principle in modern times?

Give of the best of our time to God (for example the beginning of the day set aside time for quiet time.)
Give of the first of our money. Don’t save the leftovers of your paycheck for God. Rather give to Him as soon as you receive your salary. Otherwise there may be little or nothing left.

Give of the best of your life. Don’t wait until you are old and much of your life is over to start serving God. This attitude is often seen in people who put off serving God because they need to finish something first (exam, school, promotion, marriage, paying off house, etc.) Our very bodies should be presented to God as a living sacrifice.

Verse 5 – This the the Old Testament parallel for the teaching that a worker is worthy of his wages. Luke 10:7. This means that those who are working for God should be supported by other believers.

Whose genealogy is not traced – This supports the interpretation that says verse 3 means that Melchizedek’s genealogy is not recorded (as opposed to he is a divine being who was never created).

Application: What specific thing do you need to obey in order to put what we have learned into practice?