

# “So Great a Salvation”

Lesson 6, for Sunday April 8, 2001

**“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation of *his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.” Hebrews 7:1-3, NAS**

**“Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?” Hebrews 7:11, NAS**

**“For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.” Hebrews 7:26-27, NAS**

## The Outline

### D. The Order of Melchizedek (7:1-28)

1. Melchizedek the Priest-King (7:1-3).
2. The greatness of Melchizedek (7:4-10).
3. Imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood (7:11-14).
4. Superiority of the new priesthood (7:15-19).
5. Superior because of divine oath (7:20-22).
6. Superior because of its permanence (7:23-25).
7. Superior because of the character of Jesus (7:26-28).

## The Argument

Christ, then, is by divine appointment a high priest of Melchizedek’s order. You remember the account of Melchizedek, priest of God Most High. He appears suddenly in the sacred record, without antecedents, and nothing is said of his subsequent career. Yet he was a very great man; our father Abraham paid him tithes and received his blessing. You might even say that Levi, ancestor of the priestly families of Israel, paid Melchizedek tithes in the person of his great-grandfather Abraham. This implies that Melchizedek is greater than Levi, and Melchizedek’s priesthood is better than Aaron’s. And indeed, it is obvious, for if perfect access to God had been attainable under the Aaronic priesthood, why should God have acclaimed the Messiah as priest of a different order?

Jesus’ priesthood after Melchizedek’s order is superior to Aaron’s priesthood in many ways. Jesus, unlike Aaron and his successors, was confirmed in office by an oath of God. Jesus is immortal, whereas the priests of Aaron’s line die one by one. Jesus is sinless, whereas the priests of Aaron’s line have to present a sin-offering for their own cleansing before they can present one for the people. Their sacrificial service must be constantly repeated, because it is never truly effective; Jesus, by the single sacrifice of Himself, put away His people’s sin forever.

## The Key Words

Μελχισέδεκ -- A proper name translated as “Melchizedek,” it comes from the Hebrew, where it means “king of righteousness.” For his story we must look at Genesis 14:17-20.

## The Quotations

**Hebrews 7:17** “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” Psalm 110:4

**Hebrews 7:21** “The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘Thou art a priest forever...’” Psalm 110:4 - same place