

## January 14-Genesis 14

In Genesis 14 we are introduced to one of the most mysterious figures in the Scripture, namely the Priest and King of Salem known as Melchizedek. Melchizedek is introduced in verse 18 as the “King of Salem”. Admittedly, we don’t know much about Salem in Abram’s day, but the Scriptures indicate in Psalm 76:2 that Salem is another historic name for Jerusalem. There are a few interesting truths we read about Melchizedek but one of the first oddities about him is found in verse 18 where the reader discovers that Melchizedek is both the King of Salem as well as a priest of God Most High. Moses leaves no room whatsoever to interpret this text in any way except to say definitively that Melchizedek was both a King and a Priest of God. This dual role is quite unique, in fact we find no other man who maintains both roles in Scripture. The Old Testament Scriptures are very clear about the different roles of the Levitical priesthood and the governmental king, and it is clear that these roles should not be mixed (see Saul 1 Samuel 13). Because of this strange combination, the reader immediately gets a sense of the unique character that is Melchizedek.

As we turn over to the New Testament, we read in the book of Hebrews the symbolism of Melchizedek as well as his significance in foreshadowing the coming Messiah. Chapter 7 verses 1-3 says “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 part of everything. 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.” Hebrews sheds some light on the importance of the character of Melchizedek in foreshadowing the coming Christ, but it is important to mention up front that the author of Hebrews is not claiming that Melchizedek was God but merely a foreshadowing by virtue of his role and name of the coming Savior. The author clearly states in verse three that Melchizedek is one who resembles the Son of God. With that in mind however, we see the beauty of the Scripture in a new light as we consider how Melchizedek gives us a glimpse into the identity of the coming Christ.

First, we read that Melchizedek’s name is literally translated “king of righteousness.” Melchizedek was evidently very righteous by worldly standards but in Jesus we now serve the only man to live on this planet who was totally righteous as well as our great King.

Second, the author of Hebrews tells us that Melchizedek is “without father or mother.” This does not mean that Melchizedek was born supernaturally; it simply means that the text in Genesis does not include a genealogy for him. When you begin to consider how the first book of the Bible treats most of its characters you see that this is unique for no genealogy whatsoever to be given but it is not coincidence. No, God designed His Word to be written so that Melchizedek’s origin would be a mystery. In the same way, His Son, the true King of Righteousness would be conceived in such a strange and supernatural way that even Joseph considered divorcing Mary (Matthew 1) because of the impossibility of her virgin conception.

Third and finally we read that Melchizedek had “neither beginning of days nor end of life.” Again, this is a reference to the truth that Genesis neglects to share with us any details about Melchizedek’s birth nor death. However, while we know that Melchizedek being a mortal man faced death, we also know that the greater Melchizedek, the true King of Righteousness Jesus Christ, has always existed (John 1:1) and will live for all eternity (Romans 6:9).

