

## COVENANT OF MELCHIZEDEK

### SUMMARY

In a Canadian city long ago there was a small local restaurant that ran advertisements on the radio with these memorable words: "I am the pizza king. I can do anything." If the pizza king blesses you, what do you get? You get pizza, of course. The Bible says Melchizedek, whose name means King of Righteousness, was also the King of Salem, which means King of Peace. In Genesis chapter fourteen<sup>1</sup> Melchizedek blesses Abram: "**Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of Heaven and Earth**". The Scripture leaves unstated what the blessing is. However, Melchizedek is the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace. Therefore we deduce the blessing Abram received is righteousness and peace. Specifically: the righteousness of God Most High and peace with the Creator of Heaven and Earth. The righteousness of God Most High is humanly unobtainable by the sons of Adam since Adam sinned and therefore all who descend from him are sinners. What Abram could not obtain by merit he received as the unmerited gift or blessing of the priest Melchizedek.

### THE KEY IDEA

A covenant is NOT a contract (as we normally think).

**A contract is an agreement between identified parties.** A contract is a transaction.

**A covenant is an agreement that changes the identity of the parties.** A covenant is a transformation.

The concept of transforming one's identity is novel to some. Western thinking has moved to the principle of inalienable human rights from birth regardless of age, gender or station in life. This has not always been the case. The foundation of Western civilization is Judeo-Christian belief as taught in the Bible. In the Bible rights and privileges are not the same for all people and vary depending on age, gender, and many other criteria. As we will see, the Bible shows it is possible to change one's identity through covenant. As would be expected, changing one's identity changes one's rights, privileges, and station in life.

### THE COVENANT OF MELCHIZEDEK

There is a saying in Bible interpretation "The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained." The covenant of Melchizedek is the most remarkable illustration of this principle in the whole Bible. The revelation of the nature of God and his relationship with man is generally progressive throughout Scripture. This means that as layer upon layer of history and prophecy accumulates, who God is and how he deals with man is unveiled. The covenant of Melchizedek is an exception to this rule. The covenant of Melchizedek occurs early in the Book of Genesis, chapter fourteen, but it contains the essential ingredients of the New

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<sup>1</sup> The spiritual number 14 means RIGHTEOUSNESS (14). For a full explanation of spiritual numbers please visit our site.

Covenant in Jesus Christ. The covenant of Melchizedek does not foreshadow the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. Rather, it is a foretaste of the same feast – rich in all its goodness, limited only in its quantity.

## JOURNEYS OF ABRAM

God called Abram and told him:

“Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the people of the Earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Abram followed the call of God. This is a command with a promise. There is obedience to a call, but there is no covenant seen. Why not? Up to this point there is no transformation of identity. Abram is still Abram. No covenant signs or tokens are present.

When Abram got to the great tree of Moreh, in Shechem, Canaan, God said:

“To your Seed I will give this land.” (Genesis 12:7)

Abram built an altar there. Monuments such as trees and altars are seen in covenants. The great tree and the altar appear to be simply memorials of God’s declaration or markers indicating ownership of the land (by faith). Abram is still Abram. No covenant yet.

After Lot departed from Abram to head east across the Jordan to the good pasture there, God said:

“Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land you see I will give to your Seed forever. I will make your Seed like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.” (Genesis 13:14-17)

God is increasing the scope of the blessing he is promising. Not only a bigger area of land, but to own for a longer period of time: forever! He is also increasing the stock of Abram’s offspring – to be literally countless! Abram moves to the great tree of Mamre near Hebron and builds another altar.

Four kings from the east make war on five kings in the valley of the Jordan near the Dead Sea. They carry away Lot who was living in Sodom. With the help of some local allies Abram pursues the four kings and defeats them in a battle in the far north of Abram’s inheritance at a place called Dan– then pursues them past Damascus. Abram brings Lot back plus all the spoils and property taken by the five kings.

Something remarkable happens. A certain king of Salem, Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, brings out bread and wine and blesses Abram. Abram gives Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils and returns the rest of it to its original owners. A ritual took place: Melchizedek brought bread and wine and gave Abram a blessing. Abram partook of those sacred emblems and gave a tenth of the goods to Melchizedek.

Was the ritual shared between Abram and Melchizedek an induction into a new covenant? Was it a memorial of a covenant already entered into? Or, was it no covenant at all?

Before we address the question of the covenant we will look at Melchizedek, the covenant maker.

### THE PERSON MELCHIZEDEK

Was this priest Melchizedek the Lord Jesus in the flesh? No. The Bible says he is comparable to the Son of God only in respect of his everlasting priesthood:

*“...like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.”* (Hebrews 7:3)

Therefore, we understand he is not the Son of God, only *like him* in one remarkable aspect. Melchizedek was a mortal man who was appointed to an extraordinarily high office. This office is by appointment of J-H-W-H (The LORD):

*“The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind:  
You are a priest in the order of Melchizedek”* (Psalm 110:4)

This office is not hereditary. For this reason, no account of the lineage of Melchizedek is provided in Genesis (see Hebrews 7:3).

### THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

The Book of Hebrews teaches us the priesthood of Melchizedek is an eternal priesthood, superior to the priesthood instituted under the Law of Moses, which was a priesthood destined to perish. In fact the priesthood of Melchizedek is the same priesthood the Lord Jesus occupies now (Hebrews 7:24-27). In other words, there is no higher priesthood than the priesthood of Melchizedek. The emblems of the bread and the wine brought forward by Melchizedek are the same as we use to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. There can be no other conclusion than Abram was made a partaker of the same eternal covenant with God as belongs to Christians! He drew near to God, through a priest of the order of Melchizedek and worshipped by partaking of the emblems of Holy Communion. The only difference is Abram worshipped before the Cross, and we worship after the Cross.

The covenant Abram entered is the same covenant Christians enter (Galatians 3:1-7). It is not a shadow of the New Covenant – it is the New Covenant. It has the same priesthood, the same emblems, the same blessings, and it honors the same God.

Genesis says:

*“Then Melchizedek [King of Righteousness]  
king of Salem [King of Peace]  
brought out bread and wine [same emblems];  
He was priest of God Most High [same priesthood], and he blessed Abram saying;  
Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of Heaven and Earth; [same blessing]  
and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” (Genesis 14:19-20)*

Abram received two blessings, or gifts from Melchizedek: (both unobtainable by human effort or merit)

- Righteousness (of God Most High)
- Peace (with the Creator of Heaven and Earth)

Compare the blessings of Abram with the blessings of Christians in the New Testament:

### **NEW COVENANT IN JESUS CHRIST**

John describes people who belong to Jesus and it appears to be the same as the blessing of Abram:

“He [Jesus] came to his own [the Jews] but his own did not receive him;  
 Yet to all who received him [from the Gentiles] to those who believed in his name [believers];  
 he gave the right to be called children of God [righteous as God, at peace with God]  
 children not born of natural descent [like Melchizedek – not an hereditary office]  
 nor of a human decision or a husband’s will [not by human effort or by human merit]  
 but born of God [but blessed: receiving the gift of the Spirit of God]” (John 1:11-13)

John says the believer in Jesus is a child of God. Does the blessing of Melchizedek compare to that?

Examine closely the blessing uttered by Melchizedek. Rewording the blessing, this is what he says:

(1) I, Melchizedek, evoke blessing upon Abram on behalf of God Most High;

(2) I, Melchizedek, evoke blessing upon God Most High.

How can Melchizedek evoke a blessing upon God Most High? The Book of Hebrews teaches us in the same passages dealing with Melchizedek:

“And without doubt, the lessor person is blessed by the greater.” (Hebrews 7:7)

In respect of honor, or capacity to evoke blessings, Melchizedek is equal to God Most High (Jesus)!

A child does not possess the honor of the parent. However, the child of God is in a special category because the child of God possesses the honor of God. This is clarified when Jesus declared:

“Call no man on earth father, for one is your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 23:9)

“For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister ...” (Mark 3:35)

Thus Jesus declares the children of God to be his brothers and sisters. We are equal to Jesus in honor before the Father in heaven. We can bless Jesus and Jesus can bless us. The divinity of Jesus is without question since the Lord declared:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:58)

The children of God by faith in Jesus are not God. But through the Melchizedek blessing we have obtained the same honor, i.e. the same righteousness, as Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, who is God.

The covenant of Melchizedek is the same covenant Christians enter into when they believe in Jesus:

### THE COVENANT OF MELCHIZEDEK

The covenant transformation:	<b><u>from believer in God</u></b> (having faith in an eternal God) to <b><u>blessed of God</u></b> (sharing eternal possessions with God)
Signs of the covenant:	<b><u>wine</u></b> (blood of eternal sacrifice) <b><u>bread</u></b> (body of eternal sacrifice)
The new authority / role / position:	<b><u>righteousness of God Most High</u></b> <b><u>peace with the Creator of Heaven and Earth</u></b>
The new responsibility:	<b><u>channel of blessing to the world</u></b> (a witness that others might believe and receive)
The new privileges / rights:	<b><u>righteousness safely guarded</u></b>
The new destiny:	<b><u>eternal reward in God</u></b>



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<sup>2</sup> Source of image: [jerusalem.baskets.com](http://jerusalem.baskets.com)