MELCHIZEDEK

"Consider how great this man was"

HEBREWS 7:4

"There is so much to say, but . . ."

ADAPTED FROM HEBREWS 5:11

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MELCHIZEDEK

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The mystery begins with a meal in Genesis and opens into the everlasting Priesthood of Yeshua.

INTRODUCTION

THERE IS SO MUCH TO SAY...

There are moments in Scripture when a single sentence seems to open a door into a room we did not know was there. Hebrews gives us such a moment when, in the middle of speaking about the priesthood of Yeshua, the writer suddenly pauses: "About him we have many words to say, and hard to interpret, seeing you have become dull of hearing." Hebrews 5:11.

The "him" is Melchizedek.

It is an arresting statement. Melchizedek occupies only a few verses in Genesis, one line in Psalm 110, and then suddenly becomes central to the argument of Hebrews. Scripture gives us very little biography, yet tells us there is very much to say.

That alone should make us stop and listen. Yeshua said something similar to His disciples on the night before His suffering: "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth ..." John 16:12–13.

The disciples had walked with Him. They had heard the parables, seen the signs, watched the dead raised, and sat at His table. Yet there were still things they could not receive until the Spirit had come.

The resurrection, the ascension, the enthronement of Messiah, His heavenly priesthood, and the meaning of what had been accomplished at the cross would all have to be opened to them from the Scriptures.

That is precisely what begins to happen after Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks, known in the New Testament as Pentecost).

Peter stands in Jerusalem and reaches immediately for Psalm 110. The apostles begin to speak not merely of Yeshua who had walked among them, but of Yeshua exalted at the right hand of the Father.

The apostles cannot leave that psalm alone. Yeshua had already set it before the leaders. Peter preached it at Shavuot. Paul sees the same seating when he writes that God raised Messiah and seated Him in the heavenly places, and that He raised us up together and made us sit together in Him. Hebrews returns to the right hand again and again. Psalm 110 is not a rare text. It is the throne-psalm of the risen Lord.

Hebrews takes us still further. It draws together Abraham, Melchizedek, David, the priesthood, covenant, sacrifice, inheritance, Zion and the throne, and shows that all of them meet in the Messiah.

The mystery therefore begins with Melchizedek, but it does not end with Melchizedek. It ends with Yeshua. The invitation of Hebrews is not merely to solve an ancient identity puzzle.

It is to behold the greatness of the One who is our eternal High Priest. Melchizedek matters because Scripture uses him to reveal the order, character and majesty of the priesthood of Messiah. Only three biblical books name Melchizedek directly: Genesis, Psalms and Hebrews. Yet those three witnesses stretch from the days of Abraham, through David, to the apostolic proclamation of the risen Messiah.

Genesis gives us the meeting. Psalm 110 gives us the promise. Hebrews gives us the interpretation. And the Spirit says there is much to say. So we begin where Scripture begins: with Abram returning from battle, a mysterious King-Priest coming out to meet him, and bread and wine placed before the father of the faithful.

CHAPTER 1

THE KING-PRIEST APPEARS

Genesis 14 is a chapter of kings, armies, conquest and rescue. Four kings make war against five. Cities are plundered. Lot is taken captive. Abram gathers his trained servants, pursues the invaders, defeats them and returns with the people and possessions that had been carried away.

It is on the road back from victory that the story suddenly changes. "Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High." Genesis 14:18.

The meeting is not an interruption of the victory. It is the celebration of it. A King-Priest comes out with bread and wine to the man who has returned from battle. Scripture will show that meal again in the upper room. We will come to that. Here it is enough to see what Genesis actually places in the valley: triumph, blessing, and a table.

No genealogy introduces him. No account of his calling is given. No explanation tells us how a man can be both king and priest.

He simply appears. His name is Melchizedek — Malki-Tzedek — a Hebrew name which Hebrews 7:2 interprets as "King of Righteousness". He is king of Salem, a name Hebrews interprets for us as "King of Peace". He is also priest of El Elyon, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.

Righteousness. Peace. Kingship. Priesthood. The words already sound larger than the man standing in the valley. Melchizedek blesses Abram: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth. Blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." Genesis 14:19–20.

The victory is immediately placed in its proper perspective. Abram, whom YHVH would later name Abraham, had fought, but God had delivered. Abram had returned with the spoils, but heaven and earth belonged to God Most High. And Abram, the man to whom the promises had been spoken, receives blessing from this King-Priest and gives him a tenth of all.

Hebrews later draws attention to the greatness of this moment: "Now consider how great this man was, to whom even Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth out of the best plunder." Hebrews 7:4.

Consider how great this man was. That is a command to look again. Abraham is no small figure in Scripture. He is the father of the faithful. The promises concerning the Seed and the nations are entrusted to him. Yet Hebrews deliberately asks us to notice that Abraham receives blessing from Melchizedek, and "without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater." Hebrews 7:7.

Something greater than Abraham is being shown to us. Yet Scripture refuses to satisfy ordinary curiosity.

We are not given Melchizedek's childhood, ancestry, later years or death. Hebrews uses that very silence. In the Genesis record he stands before us without recorded father or mother, without genealogy, without a beginning or ending of priestly service being narrated. In this literary presentation he is "made like the Son of God" and "remains a priest continually." Hebrews 7:3.

Notice the direction.

Melchizedek is made like the Son. The Son is not made like Melchizedek. The mystery points forward. What appeared for a moment in the days of Abraham becomes a prophetic pattern. A King who is righteous. A King whose kingdom is peace. A Priest who does not arise from Levi. A priesthood joined to kingship.

A blessing flowing from God Most High. A victory over hostile kings. Bread and wine placed before Abraham. Then, almost as suddenly as he appeared, Melchizedek disappears from the Genesis narrative.

But the pattern has been planted. Centuries will pass before David speaks his name again. And when he does, Melchizedek will no longer be merely a mysterious priest from Abraham's past.

He will become the key to the future Priest-King whom YHVH Himself appoints forever.

CHAPTER 2

ABRAHAM REJOICED TO SEE MY DAY

Melchizedek does not meet Abram empty-handed. He brings bread and wine. Genesis does not stop to explain the act, but once the rest of Scripture has spoken, it becomes difficult to pass over those two elements without hearing an echo. On the night before His death, Yeshua also took bread and wine and placed them before the heirs of Abraham's faith.

He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples. Then He took the cup and said, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins." Matthew 26:28.

The scene in the upper room does not diminish Genesis 14.

It illuminates it. Long before Sinai, long before Aaron, long before the tabernacle and its sacrifices, Abraham encounters a priest of God Most High who comes with bread and wine. Then, at the threshold of the cross, Yeshua places bread and wine before His disciples and tells them to receive these signs in remembrance of Him.

The Gospel did not begin in Matthew. Paul says something astonishing in Galatians: "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Good News beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you all the nations will be blessed.'" Galatians 3:8.

The Gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham because the promise given to Abraham was always moving towards Messiah.

Paul makes the identification explicit: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. He doesn't say, 'To descendants', as of many, but as of one, 'To your offspring', which is Messiah." Galatians 3:16.

The promise had a Person at its centre.

Yeshua Himself said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad." John 8:56.

We are not told to reduce that statement to one isolated event. Abraham's life is filled with glimpses: the promise of the Seed, the covenant, the mysterious visitation beneath the terebinths, Isaac received back from the place of sacrifice, and here in Genesis 14 the blessing of the King-Priest with bread and wine.

Abraham lived by promise because he was looking towards something — and Someone — still to come. Hebrews says that when Abraham offered Isaac, he did so "concluding that God is able to raise up even from the dead. Figuratively speaking, he also did receive him back from the dead." Hebrews 11:19.

Resurrection was already present in the faith of Abraham.

So too was the covenant meal. At Eden, mankind ate and death entered. The tree from which humanity took became associated with disobedience, exile and the loss of access to the Tree of Life.

The Gospel answers that tragedy not with human effort, but with the life of Another given for us. Yeshua speaks in John 6 of eating His flesh and drinking His blood — language of participation in His life, received by faith.

The meal He later gives His disciples becomes a simple, profound proclamation: our life is in Him. This is why the bread and wine of Genesis 14 are so suggestive. They stand at the meeting place of victory, blessing, priesthood and promise. Abram has returned from defeating kings.

Melchizedek comes out to meet him. The King of Righteousness and Peace blesses the man who carries the promise of the Seed. Bread and wine are set before him. Abram responds with honour.

Then the scene closes. But centuries later, another Son of Abraham will take bread and wine. He will speak of His body and His blood. He will go out from that meal to defeat enemies far greater than the kings of the plain — sin, death and the powers of darkness. And after the victory, He will take His seat.

The road from Genesis 14 is already bending towards Psalm 110.

CHAPTER 3

THE COVENANT OF PROMISE

To understand the priesthood of Melchizedek, we must notice when it appears. It appears before Sinai. Abraham receives promise before there is a Levitical priesthood, before there is a tabernacle, before there is a nation gathered at Horeb.

The covenantal foundation of the story is therefore older than the later administration of the Law that came through Moses. Paul makes this point with great care. Speaking of the promise to Abraham, he writes: "A covenant confirmed beforehand by God in Messiah, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect." Galatians 3:17.

What God promised to Abraham was not cancelled by what came later.

That matters enormously. The promise was that blessing would come to the families of the earth through Abraham's Seed. The Gospel rests upon that promise because the Seed is Messiah. Those who belong to Messiah therefore stand inside the fulfilment of what was spoken to Abraham: "If you are Messiah's, then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise." Galatians 3:29.

The inheritance is received by promise.

This does not make the Torah — a Hebrew word meaning 'instruction' — the enemy of grace. Nor does it turn the Hebrew Scriptures into a discarded first attempt at redemption. Paul's argument is more precise. He distinguishes the covenant of promise from the later arrangement that could not annul it.

Hebrews likewise distinguishes between priesthoods. The point is not that God changed His mind about righteousness; the point is that one priestly order was temporary, while the promise towards which it pointed was eternal.

The distinction becomes especially important at Sinai. Israel heard the voice of YHVH and willingly entered into covenant. The people were called to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Exodus 19:6. Yet the story of Sinai also recounts refusal, fear, mediation, rebellion and finally the sin of the golden calf. A priestly system centred in Aaron and Levi comes into view within that broken history.

The original promise to Abraham, however, remained. Paul insists upon it. What came later could not make the promise void. This is where Melchizedek becomes so important. He shows us a priesthood associated with Abraham before Levi ever existed as a tribe.

Hebrews even argues that Levi, still in the loins of Abraham, can, in a representative sense, be seen as acknowledging the superiority of Melchizedek when Abraham gives a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek. Hebrews 7:9–10.

The argument is deliberate: the priesthood of Messiah is not defined by the later Levitical order.

It belongs to another priestly order altogether. Yeshua comes from Judah, "about which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." Hebrews 7:14. If priesthood were limited forever to the Aaronic pattern, Yeshua could not be priest.

But Psalm 110 had already announced another order: "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek." Psalm 110:4.

Not the order of Aaron. Not temporary. Forever. Not merely priest. Priest-King.

Not grounded in genealogy. Grounded in the oath of God and "the power of an endless life." Hebrews 7:16.

This is why Hebrews speaks of a change connected with the priesthood. The temporary Aaronic order gives way before the eternal Priest to whom it had always pointed. What was shadow finds Substance. What was repetitive finds fulfilment. What required succession meets the One who lives forever.

And the promise given to Abraham is not left behind. It reaches its goal. The Seed has come. The blessing has come. The Priest has come. The covenant meal of bread and wine has been placed before us again.

The nations are being gathered. And those who belong to Messiah are heirs according to promise. The root of our faith is not Rome, nor Athens, nor later religious tradition. It is the Scriptural promise entrusted to Abraham and fulfilled in Yeshua, the Root and Offspring of David, the Lion of Judah, the Seed in whom the nations are blessed.

Melchizedek stands at the beginning of that revelation like a signpost beside the road. But the road is taking us somewhere higher. To Zion.

CHAPTER 4

YOU HAVE COME TO MOUNT ZION

Scripture often teaches by placing two things side by side. Two sons. Two women. Two mountains. Two Jerusalems. In Galatians 4, Paul takes the history of Hagar and Sarah and uses it to illuminate two covenantal realities. One corresponds to Sinai and bondage; the other to "Jerusalem above", which is free.

Hebrews 12 presents the same contrast in different language. "For you have not come to a mountain that might be touched and that burnt with fire ..." Hebrews 12:18.

The writer evokes Sinai — fire, darkness, tempest, trumpet, fear, a voice the people begged not to hear again.

Then the entire atmosphere changes: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable multitudes of angels, to the festal gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven." Hebrews 12:22–23.

You have come.

Not merely "you will come one day", but "you have come". The believer's life is being located in a different realm. Hebrews is not denying the historical importance of Sinai; it is showing where the completed work of Messiah has brought us.

Hebrews contrasts fear with access, distance with nearness, an earthly shadow with heavenly reality, and a temporary priestly administration with the eternal priesthood of Messiah. We have come to the assembly gathered around the Firstborn.

This is where Melchizedek belongs. He is King of Righteousness and King of Peace. He combines throne and priesthood.

He appears in the history of Abraham, yet the order associated with his name is used by David in Psalm 110 to describe the eternal Priest who sits beside YHVH. Zion is therefore not an incidental backdrop to the Melchizedek revelation.

Psalm 110 says, "YHVH will send out the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule amongst your enemies." Psalm 110:2.

The Priest-King reigns from Zion. And Hebrews tells us that we have come to Zion.

This is the great movement of the Bible. We begin with a man meeting Abram in the valley, but we end looking into the heavenly city. We begin with bread and wine, but we end at a throne of grace.

We begin with a blessing spoken over one man, but we end with an innumerable company and the assembly of the firstborn. The language of the firstborn in Hebrews 12 is important. Israel was initially called to be a kingdom of priests.

The firstborn belonged particularly to YHVH. Later, after the sin of the golden calf, Levi was taken for priestly service in place of the firstborn. But Hebrews brings the language of firstborn back into the centre and places it in Zion.

Yeshua is Himself the Firstborn — "the firstborn amongst many brothers." Romans 8:29. He is the Son over God's house. And Hebrews says He is not ashamed to call those who are sanctified His brethren. Hebrews 2:11.

The heavenly Jerusalem is therefore not populated by spectators. It is an assembly of sons gathered around the Son. Peter uses another expression: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession …" 1 Peter 2:9.

Royal priesthood.

The phrase would have sounded impossible under the strict separation of kingship and Aaronic priesthood. Israel's kings came from Judah; the Aaronic priests came from Levi. Attempts by kings to seize priestly functions brought judgement.

But Melchizedek had already shown a different pattern. He was king and priest. Psalm 110 announces the Messiah in that pattern. Zechariah sees it again when he speaks of the Branch: "He will be a priest on his throne. The counsel of peace will be between them both." Zechariah 6:13.

A priest on His throne.

Righteousness and peace meeting in one Person. This is Zion's King. And this is why our calling cannot be understood merely by looking backwards to Sinai. Hebrews tells us where we have come.

We have come to Zion, to the city of the living God, to Yeshua the Mediator of the new covenant, to sprinkled blood that speaks better things than that of Abel. The priesthood that brings us there is not temporary.

It is forever.

CHAPTER 5

SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND

Psalm 110 begins with one of the most extraordinary conversations in Scripture: "YHVH says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool for your feet.'" Psalm 110:1.

Picture the scene. David, speaking by the Spirit, records YHVH addressing someone whom David himself calls "my Lord". David is Israel's king, yet he acknowledges One greater than himself. Who is this Lord?

Yeshua takes this verse and places it before the religious leaders in Jerusalem. He challenges them to identify the One whom David calls "my Lord". If Messiah is merely David's son, He asks, how is it that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls Him Lord? Matthew 22:41–45.

The question is not a riddle for amusement.

It presses towards the true identity of Messiah. He is indeed Son of David, but He is greater than David. David's throne points beyond itself. At His trial, Yeshua again reaches towards the same heavenly scene. When asked under oath whether He is the Messiah, the Son of God, He answers with the language of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110: "...after this you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of the sky." Matthew 26:64.

The High Priest recognises the gravity of Yeshua's claim and tears his garments. Torah had expressly forbidden the High Priest to tear his clothes in mourning. Leviticus 21:10.

The Gospel does not itself tell us that Caiaphas thereby ceased legally to hold office, and we need not force the symbolism beyond what is written. The contrast is already powerful enough:

the earthly High Priest rends his garments while condemning the One whom heaven is about to reveal as the everlasting High Priest. John gives us another striking detail at the cross. Yeshua's tunic is seamless, woven from the top in one piece, and the soldiers refuse to tear it, casting lots instead. John 19:23–24.

Scripture does not tell us that this happened specifically to preserve a priestly garment, but the image is difficult to miss. The condemned Messiah passes through death without His priestly calling being torn from Him. His priesthood does not depend upon an earthly robe or genealogy.

It rests upon the oath of God and the power of an endless life. After the resurrection and ascension, Psalm 110 becomes central to apostolic preaching. At Shavuot, Peter proclaims that David did not ascend into the heavens, but said: "YHVH said to my Lord, 'Sit by my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" Acts 2:34–35. Peter's conclusion is thunderous: the crucified Yeshua has been made both Lord and Messiah.

The One rejected on earth is enthroned in heaven. Paul sees the same reality when he prays that the eyes of believers will be enlightened to know the exceeding greatness of God's power, "which he worked in Messiah when he raised him from the dead and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places." Ephesians 1:20.

Hebrews returns to it again and again. After making purification for sins, the Son "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hebrews 1:3. Hebrews says that after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, Messiah "sat down on the right hand of God, from that time waiting until his enemies are made the footstool of his feet." Hebrews 10:12–13.

He sat down. Those three words contain the Gospel.

The sacrifice is accepted. The work is accomplished. The Priest is enthroned. The King reigns. And His enemies are already placed beneath the certainty of the Father's promise: till I make them Your footstool.

Psalm 110 is not merely a prophecy of where Yeshua went after His ascension. It is a revelation of where He is now. Seated. That changes how we understand everything that follows.

CHAPTER 6

THE PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE

There were no chairs for the priests in the tabernacle. That small detail speaks loudly once Hebrews teaches us to notice that Yeshua sat down. The sons of Aaron stood to minister because their work was repetitive. Sacrifice followed sacrifice. Morning followed evening. Year followed year.

The Day of Atonement came again because the blood of bulls and goats could never finally take away sin. Hebrews contrasts the ministry of the Aaronic priesthood with that of Messiah: "Every priest indeed stands day by day serving and offering often the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:11–12.

They stood. He sat. The difference is not posture alone. It is completion.

The cry from the cross was, "It is finished!" John 19:30. The resurrection is heaven's declaration that death could not hold Him. The ascension carries Him into the heavenly sanctuary.

By taking His seat at the right hand of God, Yeshua shows that His sacrifice is complete and does not need to be repeated. This is why the imagery of rest belongs naturally with the priesthood of Yeshua. At creation, God worked and then rested. Adam entered a world in which God's creative work had already been completed. Adam's first full day was Sabbath.

Adam began not by completing creation, but by receiving what God had completed. The Gospel carries the same pattern into redemption. We do not complete the work of Messiah. We enter it.

We are not asked to add to His sacrifice. We trust it. We are not saved by trying to make ourselves acceptable enough to approach the throne. We are invited to approach because our High Priest has already made the way. "Having then a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Yeshua, the Son of God, let's hold tightly to our confession." Hebrews 4:14.

Then comes the invitation: "Let's therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16.

A throne of grace.

The priesthood has led us to a throne. Under the old order, the mercy seat rested above the ark in the Most Holy Place. No priest sat upon it. The High Priest entered only at the appointed time and only with blood.

But Hebrews lifts our eyes from the earthly copy to the heavenly reality. The Son has passed through the heavens and sat down at the right hand of Majesty. Zechariah had seen the mystery beforehand: "He will bear the glory, and will sit and rule on his throne. He will be a priest on his throne." Zechariah 6:13.

The throne does not cancel the priesthood.

It reveals its royal character. This also gives new depth to Paul's language about our union with Messiah. God "raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua." Ephesians 2:6.

Paul is not saying that believers have become independent rulers beside Messiah. Everything is "in Messiah". Our life, standing, access and inheritance are found in union with Him.

But the implication is still breathtaking. Those raised with the seated Priest are taught to live from His finished work rather than towards it. We begin from a position of rest. Not passivity. Not laziness. Rest is not the absence of obedience; it is the starting point from which obedience flows.

Rest is the end of self-salvation. The order matters. We do not work so that Messiah will finish redemption. Messiah has finished redemption; therefore we can walk in the works prepared for us.

This is the royal priesthood's place of operation. Seated with Him in the heavenly places. Standing in the world as His witnesses. Walking in obedience because we have already been brought near.

Psalm 2 shows the nations raging while heaven laughs. Psalm 110 shows the Priest-King seated while His enemies are progressively placed beneath His feet. The throne is not anxious.

The King is not pacing the floor of heaven wondering whether His Gospel will succeed. He is seated. And from Zion the rod of His strength goes forth.

CHAPTER 7

YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER

The first verse of Psalm 110 reveals the throne. The fourth reveals the priesthood. "YHVH has sworn, and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.'" Psalm 110:4.

YHVH swears.

Hebrews emphasises this oath because YHVH Himself has guaranteed that Messiah's priesthood will never end. The sons of Aaron entered office according to commandment and lineage. But concerning Messiah, Scripture speaks with an oath: You are a priest forever.

Forever changes everything. An earthly priest dies, and his successor assumes the office. Genealogy matters because succession matters. The priesthood must continue through another man. Hebrews says of Yeshua, "But he, because he lives forever, has his priesthood unchangeable." Hebrews 7:24.

Therefore Yeshua does not need a successor.

He is not one priest among many in a continuing line. He is the Priest whose life cannot be interrupted by death. This is what Hebrews means when it speaks of "the power of an endless life." Hebrews 7:16.

The resurrection is not merely proof that Yeshua survived death. It establishes the nature of His priesthood. Death, which terminated the service of every former priest, cannot terminate His. "Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.

Always lives. Always intercedes. Always Priest.

The comfort of this reality is immense. Our hope does not rest in the spiritual strength of the one who prays. It rests in the perfection of the One through whom we come to God. What sin is greater than His sacrifice? What failure is beyond His advocacy when repentance brings us back to Him? What enemy can finally separate those whom the everlasting Priest represents before the Father? The oath of God stands behind the answer.

Hebrews returns to the extraordinary way Genesis presents Melchizedek. No father or mother is recorded. No genealogy is supplied. No beginning or end of his priestly service is narrated.

The writer does not need to claim that Melchizedek literally had no parents or never died. He takes the silence of Genesis and uses it as a divinely shaped picture: Melchizedek is "made like the Son of God." Hebrews 7:3.

The likeness is striking, but the Son is greater than Melchizedek.

Yeshua truly possesses what the Genesis narrative only portrays. As the eternal Son, He truly is without beginning. He truly has conquered death. He truly holds an unending priesthood.

Yeshua truly joins kingship and priesthood in His own Person. He is King of righteousness because He has brought in everlasting righteousness. He is King of peace because He has made peace through the blood of His cross.

He is Priest of God Most High because He has offered the one sacrifice that all earlier sacrifices could only anticipate. He blesses the children of Abraham because all the promises of God find their Yes in Him.

He receives the willing homage of His people because every victory they possess is received through Him (Psalm 110:3; 1 Corinthians 15:57). And He sits upon the throne because His priesthood is royal.

Psalm 110 is therefore not telling us that Yeshua somehow borrowed an obscure ancient office.

It is telling us that the appearance of Melchizedek in Genesis was already preparing the way for the later revelation of a greater Priesthood. The pattern was revealed in Melchizedek; the substance was realised in Yeshua. And because He remains forever, the priesthood remains forever.

CHAPTER 8

HEAR HIS VOICE

The priesthood of Messiah does not lead us into lawlessness. It leads us into covenant faithfulness as YHVH writes His instruction upon our hearts. Hebrews makes this explicit when it quotes the promise of Jeremiah: "I will put my laws into their mind; I will also write them on their heart." Hebrews 8:10.

The New Covenant does not describe a people from whom God's instruction has been removed. It describes a people in whom His instruction has been internalised. The change is not from obedience to disobedience, but from stone to the heart — from external command to inward transformation.

From hearing words at a distance to knowing the Shepherd's voice. This is one of the strongest themes in Hebrews. Again and again the reader is warned: "Today if you will hear his voice, don't harden your hearts ..." Hebrews 3:7–8.

The issue goes back to the beginning. In Eden, disaster came through a crisis of hearing. Adam listened to another voice. Humanity's fall into sin was not caused by a lack of information but by a failure of obedient trust. Israel faced the same issue in the wilderness. They heard the voice of God, yet fear, unbelief and rebellion repeatedly hardened the heart.

Moses declared: "YHVH your God will raise up to you a prophet from amongst you, of your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him." Deuteronomy 18:15.

Hebrews presents the generation that failed to listen to YHVH in the wilderness as a warning to those who have now heard the voice of the Son. Yeshua is the Prophet like Moses whom we must hear.

At the Transfiguration the Father takes those words upon His own lips and centres them in the Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." Matthew 17:5.

Hear Him.

The covenant life is a listening life. Yeshua describes His people in the same way: "the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out … the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." John 10:3–4.

The Shepherd and the Priest are one.

The One who brings us near also leads us. The One who intercedes for us also teaches us. The One who sits at the right hand of God writes the will of God upon our hearts by the Spirit.

This is why James can speak of the command to love our neighbour as ourselves as the "royal law". James 2:8. Royal instruction belongs naturally in the kingdom of the Royal Priest. Grace does not create a people who no longer care how the King desires them to live. Grace creates willing people.

The great question is no longer, "How little must I obey and still be accepted?" The Gospel has brought us too near for that. The question becomes, "What pleases the One who loved me and gave Himself for me?" This is the obedience of sons, not the labour of slaves trying to purchase a place in the house.

The Torah written upon the heart is not a ladder by which we climb to heaven. Heaven has come near in Messiah. What YHVH writes within us is the life of the King being formed in His people.

The priesthood of Melchizedek therefore does not take us away from holiness. It takes us more deeply into it, because the Priest who has made us clean now calls us to bear His character.

Hear His voice. This is how Abraham walked. This is how Israel was called to walk. This is how the sheep of Yeshua still walk: hearing His voice, trusting His word and following His ways. And this is how a royal priesthood learns to serve its King.

CHAPTER 9

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

Before there was an Aaronic priesthood, there was a promise spoken over the whole nation: "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Exodus 19:6.

Not merely a kingdom with priests. A kingdom of priests.

The distinction matters. Under the later Levitical order, priestly ministry was entrusted to one tribe and the High Priesthood to one family. That arrangement had a real and God-given purpose within Israel's history.

But it was not the end towards which the whole story was moving. Peter takes the language of Exodus and applies it to the people of Messiah: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession …" 1 Peter 2:9.

Royal priesthood. There again are the two things Melchizedek held together: kingship and priesthood.

The calling of the people reflects the calling of their Head. Yeshua is the great High Priest; His people are a priestly people. Yeshua is the King; His people belong to His kingdom and are destined to reign with Him.

Yeshua is the Firstborn; Hebrews brings us to "the festal gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven." Hebrews 12:23.

Sonship is therefore woven through the priesthood.

Hebrews begins by asking of the angels, "For to which of the angels did he say at any time, 'You are my Son.

Today I have become your father?'" Hebrews 1:5. Then in chapter 2 the Son who has been crowned with glory brings "many children to glory" and is not ashamed to call them brethren. Hebrews 2:10–11.

The High Priest does not stand at a distance from those He represents. He calls them family. Paul says the same mystery another way: Yeshua is "the firstborn amongst many brothers." Romans 8:29.

The Spirit of adoption teaches us to cry, "Abba! Father!" Romans 8:15.

This is why the priesthood of believers must never be reduced to religious activity. Priesthood begins with belonging.

The son serves because he is a son. The priest draws near because the High Priest has opened the way. The worshipper offers because the perfect sacrifice has already been offered. The witness speaks because the King has sent him.

Paul urges believers to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service." Romans 12:1.

The sacrifice is no longer an animal laid upon an altar. The willing person becomes the offering — a life yielded, a heart surrendered, a body offered in obedience.

This prepares us for one of the most beautiful lines in Psalm 110: "Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of your power, in holy array." Psalm 110:3.

The King gathers a people who freely offer themselves, made willing and clothed in holiness.

Hebrews names the offerings that remain: "Through him, then, let's offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which proclaim allegiance to his name. But don't forget to be doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Hebrews 13:15–16.

Praise and mercy are the sacrifices of a people who already have a Priest.

David knew the language of priestly service before the Temple stood. "Let my prayer be set before you like incense; the lifting up of my hands like the evening sacrifice." Psalm 141:2. He was king, yet he stood like a priest — hands lifted, offering given, no animal required in that moment. The royal priesthood already flickers in him.

The Priest-King has a people. They are not dragged unwillingly behind His chariot. They are willing. Their strength is not rebellion subdued merely by force, but hearts conquered by love and truth. They have seen the King. They have heard His voice. They have been cleansed by His sacrifice. They have been brought near by His blood.

So they offer themselves. This is the royal priesthood. Not a new religious elite. A people who belong wholly to the King-Priest. A holy nation gathered from the nations. An assembly of firstborn sons gathered around the Firstborn Son. A people who serve from rest, obey from love and reign only in union with the One who sits upon the throne. And Psalm 110 says that when the day of His power comes, they will appear like dew from the womb of the morning.

CHAPTER 10

THE DAY OF YOUR POWER

Psalm 110 moves from throne to kingdom, from the seated King to the people who gather around Him. "YHVH will send out the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule amongst your enemies." Psalm 110:2.

The King does not wait for every enemy to disappear before He reigns.

He rules in their midst. That is one of the great paradoxes of the present age. Yeshua is enthroned, yet rebellion remains. The kingdom has come, yet we still pray, "Your kingdom come." The enemies are placed beneath His feet by decree, yet Hebrews can still say, "we don't yet see all things subjected to him." Hebrews 2:8.

The kingdom advances between the promise and its final visible completion. And it advances from Zion. Isaiah had seen the nations streaming to the mountain of YHVH, saying, "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." For the law shall go out of Zion, and YHVH's word from Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:3.

At Shavuot, the Spirit is poured out in Jerusalem.

The Gospel begins to move outward. Men from the nations hear the mighty works of God. Peter proclaims the enthroned Messiah from Psalm 110. Thousands respond. The rod of strength goes forth from Zion.

Not by the sword of empire. Not by coercion. By the Gospel, in the power of the Spirit. Paul calls the Gospel "the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes." Romans 1:16.

The apostles go into the world carrying a message centred on a crucified and risen King. To human wisdom it looks weak.

Yet kingdoms are shaken, idols fall, lives are transformed and communities of believers appear across the nations.

The cross becomes the strange sceptre of the Priest-King. The power of His kingdom is seen not only in the defeat of enemies, but also in enemies becoming sons.

This is why "Rule amongst your enemies" should not be heard only as destruction. There is a conquest in which rebellion is overcome by grace and hostility is disarmed by mercy.

Saul of Tarsus is not crushed into the dust and left there; he is arrested by glory, transformed, and sent out as an apostle of the King he once opposed.

That is royal conquest. The Gospel does more than silence enemies. It makes them willing. "Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of your power." Psalm 110:3.

In Psalm 110:3, the Hebrew expression behind "offer themselves willingly" carries the sense of a freewill offering.

The people offer themselves. They come freely in response to the King. We have seen that spirit before in Scripture. When the tabernacle is to be built, the willing-hearted bring their offerings. When David prepares for the house of God, the people offer willingly.

True service to YHVH cannot be produced by compulsion. It comes from a heart made willing. So the army of Psalm 110 is an unusual army. Its warriors are priests. Its clothing is the *beauties of holiness*. Its strength is received from the King. Its weapon is the word that proceeds from Him. Its offering is itself. And its appearance is compared not to iron, smoke or terror, but to dew.

The King is going forth to conquest. But behind Him comes a people made beautiful by holiness. That is the day of His power.

Revelation opens the same field of vision. Heaven is opened, and the Word of God rides forth in majesty. Behind Him come the armies of heaven, following on white horses, clothed in white, pure, fine linen (Revelation 19:11–14).

The King goes out. A holy people follow. It is still the day of His power.

CHAPTER 11

FROM THE WOMB OF THE MORNING

Few images in Psalm 110 are more beautiful than this: "Out of the womb of the morning, you have the dew of your youth." Psalm 110:3.

The language is mysterious, but the picture is luminous. Night is passing. Morning is being born. Across the earth innumerable drops of dew appear, each one catching the first light of the sun.

Psalm 110 has already shown us the King seated at the right hand of God, the rod going out from Zion, and a willing people clothed in holiness. Now those people are pictured with the freshness and multitude of morning dew.

Dew arrives quietly. It does not announce itself with thunder. It forms in the darkness and is discovered when the light comes forth. One drop appears weak. Thousands together can cover a field. Each drop is small, yet each reflects the heavens above it.

That is a remarkable picture of the people of Messiah. Micah uses the same imagery of the remnant of Jacob: "The remnant of Jacob will be amongst many peoples like dew from YHVH, like showers on the grass ..." Micah 5:7.

Dew refreshes.

Dew adorns. Dew gives life to ground that would otherwise be dry. And because each drop receives the light, the earth itself begins to sparkle with something it did not produce. So it is with the people of Yeshua.

We do not possess light in ourselves. We reflect the One who is the Light. Holiness is not spiritual decoration or religious polish; it is His character appearing in His people.

The *beauties of holiness* reveal the beauty of the King reproduced in those who belong to Him — His purity in our thoughts, His mercy in our actions and His steadfastness in our walk.

This is why willingness and holiness stand together in the Psalm. The holy person is not merely someone who has learned religious restraint. Holiness is yieldedness to God. "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God." Psalm 143:10.

The willing person says, in effect, "Not my will, but Yours." That is priestly language. Romans 12 calls us living sacrifices. A sacrifice does not retain independent ownership of itself.

It is presented. The same principle appears in the armies of Revelation. They follow the Faithful and True One, clothed in white, pure, fine linen. Revelation 19:14. Their clothing is not military armour as the world understands it.

It is purity. The kingdom of the Priest-King is populated by those who bear the beauty of His holiness. The dew also speaks of renewal. Morning after morning it appears fresh. Lamentations says the mercies of YHVH are new every morning. Creation itself teaches us that God is not exhausted by yesterday's faithfulness.

He brings forth life again. And Psalm 110 sees a people continually appearing around the eternal King. Generations pass, yet His youth does not fail. Empires rise and disappear, yet His Gospel still calls people from darkness into light.

The Priest lives forever; therefore His people are never left without a Priest. The King reigns forever; therefore His kingdom will never pass away. The Seed promised to Abraham continues to gather a family from the nations. Like dew from the womb of the morning.

This is why Zion is more than a geographical location. Zion is also the prophetic language of the reign of God,

the dwelling of God with His people, the place from which His word goes forth and the assembly into which the redeemed are gathered. And in Psalm 110, Zion is alive with a willing people reflecting the radiance of their Priest-King.

The mystery has expanded far beyond the meeting in Genesis 14. There, one priest stood before Abraham, bringing bread, wine and blessing.

Now, through the eternal Son, an innumerable priestly people stand in His light, gathered around the risen Priest-King.

CHAPTER 12

UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL

The throne of Psalm 110 is peaceful, but it is not passive. "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool for your feet." Psalm 110:1.

The word "until" carries history forward. Messiah is seated, but the story is moving towards a visible conclusion.

Paul takes up the same language in 1 Corinthians: "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death." 1 Corinthians 15:25–26.

He must reign.

Not merely He will reign one day. He reigns until every enemy is subdued. Genesis 3 had already promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. Psalm 110 develops the image: enemies become a footstool beneath the feet of the enthroned Messiah. Later in the Psalm, the language of judgement becomes explicit.

The Priest-King who first appears seated will not forever remain hidden from the rebellious world. Revelation shows the Faithful and True One coming in righteousness to judge and make war. Revelation 19:11.

The Lamb whose blood redeems is also the Lamb whose wrath the rebellious cannot finally escape. Revelation 6:16–17.

This is not a contradiction in the character of Yeshua. The King of Peace is peaceful because His kingdom is righteous. Peace without righteousness would merely preserve evil.

The same Priest who offers mercy to the repentant must finally judge what refuses mercy and continues to destroy what He loves. Psalm 2 belongs beside Psalm 110 here. The nations rage, kings set themselves against YHVH and against His Anointed, yet heaven is not shaken. YHVH says, "Yet I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion." Psalm 2:6.

Then the inheritance is promised: "Ask of me, and I will give the nations for your inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession." Psalm 2:8.

Daniel 7 sees the same great transfer of dominion. One like the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven and receives dominion, glory and a kingdom so that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. Daniel 7:13–14.

Psalm 2, Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 are windows into the same heavenly reality.

The Son receives the kingdom. The Priest-King reigns. The nations become His inheritance. And every rival authority is temporary. For believers this produces neither triumphal arrogance nor fear. Our King is seated.

We do not have to manufacture His victory. We bear witness to it. The kingdom advances now by Gospel, holiness, service, prayer and the power of the Spirit. But Scripture also promises a day when faith will become sight and every hidden rebellion will be brought into judgement.

The last enemy is death. That is the measure of the victory. Not merely better circumstances. Not merely moral improvement. Death itself destroyed. Revelation finally sees Death and Sheol cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14. What entered through Adam is finally abolished under the reign of the last Adam.

The footstool is complete. The serpent's head is crushed. The King of Righteousness and Peace reigns without rival. And the people who have been raised with Him share in the life of the kingdom that cannot die.

CHAPTER 13

HE SHALL DRINK OF THE BROOK IN THE WAY

Psalm 110 ends strangely. After throne, Zion, willing people, everlasting priesthood and victorious judgement, the final verse says: "He will drink of the brook on the way; therefore he will lift up his head." Psalm 110:7.

The image has invited many interpretations, but one thing is clear: humiliation and refreshment lie on the road to exaltation.

The King does not reach victory without passing through the way. For Yeshua, the way led through suffering. On the night of His arrest He crossed the brook Kidron and entered the garden. John 18:1.

Scripture does not explicitly say that Psalm 110:7 was fulfilled by that crossing, so we should hold the connection as meditation rather than proof. Yet the scene is profoundly suggestive.

The Priest-King of Psalm 110 walks into His hour by crossing a dark brook on the way to Gethsemane. There He speaks of another cup. "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." Luke 22:42.

The willing people of Psalm 110 have their perfect example in the willing Son.

Not My will, but Yours. He drinks the cup set before Him. He is betrayed, condemned, mocked, beaten and crucified. The One who should wear the crown receives thorns. The One who is Priest of God Most High is rejected by the earthly priesthood.

The One who sits at the right hand of Majesty is nailed between criminals. And at the end He bows His head. "When Yeshua therefore had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished!' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." John 19:30.

Psalm 110 closes with the words "he will lift up his head". The Gospel says He bowed His head in death.

Then came the third day. The head bowed at Golgotha was lifted in resurrection. Paul describes the movement in Philippians: Messiah "humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, yes, the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name." Philippians 2:8–9.

Therefore.

The word in Philippians sounds like the final line of the Psalm. He drank in the way; therefore His head is lifted. Humiliation gives way to exaltation. The cross gives way to resurrection.

The tomb gives way to ascension. The rejected One takes His seat. Colossians says that through the cross He "stripped the principalities and the powers" and "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Colossians 2:15.

The place that looked like defeat becomes the means of victory.

This is the signature of God's kingdom. The cross is the throne hidden in shame before it is revealed in glory. The Lamb conquers by being slain. The Priest offers Himself. The King wins through obedience unto death. And because His people are in Him, His path becomes the pattern of theirs. As Paul writes, "if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him." Romans 8:17.

We do not seek suffering for its own sake.

We do not pretend pain is good. But we know that suffering cannot reverse the promise. The road may pass through the brook, but the brook is not the destination. He shall lift up the head.

The Priest-King has already risen. And because He lives forever, those who belong to Him can lift up their heads too. Their redemption draws near.

CONCLUSION

CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS

We began with a question hanging over a handful of verses. Melchizedek appears in Genesis, blesses Abraham, receives a tenth, brings out bread and wine, and disappears. Then David speaks his name centuries later: "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek." Psalm 110:4.

Then Hebrews opens the mystery and says, "Now consider how great this man was." Hebrews 7:4.

But after everything Scripture has shown us, our eyes are no longer resting mainly upon the mysterious figure in Genesis. They have been lifted to Yeshua.

We have seen the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace. We have followed the bread and wine from Abraham to the upper room. We have seen the promise to Abraham finding its Seed in Messiah.

We have travelled from Sinai to Zion, from the earthly pattern to the heavenly city, from a temporary priesthood to the Priest who lives forever. We have heard YHVH say, "Sit at my right hand." We have watched the sacrifice completed and the Priest sit down.

We have approached the throne of grace. We have heard the oath that cannot be revoked: "You are a priest forever." We have discovered that the Priest-King does not stand alone. Around Him gathers a royal priesthood, an assembly of firstborn sons, a willing people clothed in the beauties of holiness, appearing like dew from the womb of the morning.

We have watched the rod go forth from Zion. We have seen enemies placed beneath His feet

and death itself named as the last enemy to be destroyed. And finally we have followed Him through the brook in the way — through humiliation, suffering and death — until the bowed head is lifted in resurrection, ascension and triumph. There really is so much to say.

But perhaps the purpose of the mystery is now clearer. Melchizedek is not given to us so that we can become fascinated with an obscure biblical character while missing the One to whom the whole pattern points.

The Spirit is showing us the greatness of Yeshua. Our High Priest did not enter an earthly sanctuary with the blood of another. He offered Himself. He did not begin a ministry that death would eventually end.

He rose in the power of an endless life. He does not stand day after day waiting for another sacrifice to be offered. He has sat down. He does not reign for one generation. He is Priest forever.

He does not merely forgive the past. He brings sons to glory, writes His ways upon their hearts, clothes them in holiness and gathers them into Zion. He does not merely survive His enemies.

He will place every enemy beneath His feet. And He does not ask His people to save themselves. He invites them to come boldly to the throne of grace. So the exhortation of Hebrews remains before us: "Now consider how great this man was." Hebrews 7:4.

Yes — consider Melchizedek.

Consider the mysterious King-Priest who met Abraham. Consider the pattern Scripture preserved. But then look beyond the pattern. Behold the Son. Behold the Priest upon His throne. Behold Yeshua, the Author and Finisher of our faith, seated at the right hand of God.

The King of Righteousness. The King of Peace. Our great High Priest. Forever.

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