

August 17, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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Thou dear Redeemer, Dying Lamb

John Cennick 1718 - 1755

Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
I love to hear of Thee;
No music like Thy charming Name,
Is half so sweet to me,
Is half so sweet to me.

O let me ever hear Thy voice
In mercy to me speak!
And in my Priest, will I rejoice,
My great Melchizedek,
My great Melchizedek.

My Jesus shall be still my theme,
While in this world I stay;
I'll sing my Jesus' lovely Name
When all things else decay,
When all things else decay.

When I appear in yonder cloud,
With all Thy favored throng,
Then I will sing more sweet, more loud,
And Christ shall be my song,
And Christ shall be my song.

•t&dw

Quote of the Week

Charles Spurgeon 1834 - 1892

“The body of divinity to which I would pin and bind myself forever, God helping me, is Christ Jesus, who is the sum and substance of the gospel, who is himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth, the all-glorious embodiment of the way, the truth, and the life.”

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Feature Article:

Melchizedek

You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 110:4; Heb 5:6; 7:17; 7:21

One of the most mysterious and intriguing figures in the Bible is Melchizedek. He appears briefly in only three verses in the Genesis narrative of Abraham's life (*Genesis 14:18-20*); and then he is mentioned by David in one verse of the Messianic declarations of *Psalm 110:4*. That's it! Yet his significance has enormous consequences for the Christian, as revealed in Hebrews chapter seven. Packed into these four Old Testament verses are truths that speak volumes, not only of the person of Christ, but of the *new covenant* age He was to usher in.

So striking are the comments made about Melchizedek in Hebrews chapter seven, that there has been considerable controversy and disagreement concerning the exact nature of his person. Some take him as a gentile priest from Jerusalem. Others have suggested (for reasons we will not get into) that he is Shem, the son of Noah. Others have suggested an angel, or a supernatural apparition. Still others believe that this was a Christophany - a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ, Himself. I tend to lean toward this latter position, though it is not without its difficulties. What is important, however, is not the precise nature of Melchizedek, himself, but what we are taught about Christ by the inspired writer of Hebrews.

We are first directed to this priest's name and title: Mechizedek, king of Salem. His name literally translates “king of righteousness”, and his title, “king of peace” (vs 2). In Christ, *righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Psalm 85:10); ...the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17)*. He brings in the Kingdom of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom 14:17)*.

He is declared to have no beginning or end - pointing to an *endless priesthood (vv 3, 8, 16, 24-25)*. Because He lives forever as our Priest, to make intercession, *he is able to save to the uttermost (to the fullest extent) those who come to God through Him (vs 25)*; and we who are *in Him* shall live together with Him, forever.

We are next exhorted to consider *the supremacy of this priest*. By receiving tithes from Abraham he is declared to be greater than Abraham, and therefore greater than Abraham's fleshly descendants (vv 4-10). He is greater than Levi - greater than Moses, Aaron, and the Levitical priests. It is interesting to note that Jesus quotes from this very Psalm (110:1) as He intimates His own supremacy to the Pharisees (Matt 22:41-46). In all things He is to have the pre-eminence (Col 1:18).

Because Christ is a priest *not* from the tribe of Levi (v 14), He is a priest over a *different* and better covenant (v 22; 8:6, 9-13; 10:15-17), *not* like the covenant made with the fathers (8:8-9). He is declared by an oath from God, coming *after the law*, to be a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (vv 21, 28). The Levitical priesthood served and presided over only the type and "*shadow of things to come, but the substance is Christ*" (Col 2:17; see also Heb 8:4-5; 10:1). He, Himself, is given as our Covenant (Isaiah 49:8). Therefore, there being a change of the priesthood and the covenant, there *must* also be a "*change of the law*" (v 12), "*an annulling of the former commandment*" which was weak and unprofitable (vv 18 - 19).

In the establishing of this new covenant Christ offered *Himself* up once as a sacrifice for sin (v 27); "*...He offered one sacrifice for sins forever...*"; "*...by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*" (Heb 10:12-14).

The priesthood is changed - the law is changed - the sacrifices are done away - the entire Mosaic economy, with all of its types and shadows, has been dissipated in the full light and fulfillment of the great Antitype. **What magnificent and epoch-changing truth is packed into just four Old Testament verses!** How much more of Christ must still be available for us in the *Law and the Prophets* (Jno 5:46; Lk 24:27). Lord, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law (Ps 119:18)!

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God - let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22

You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law (Gal 5:4) ●ejr3

Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.

The Baptism of John

The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? Luke 20:4

The chief priests and elders were questioning the source of Jesus' authority. He responds by questioning them concerning the authority by which John the Baptist performed his baptism - was it from God, or from men (i.e. by his own authority)? Jesus' question was not random - not just something with which to confound them. John's ministry was inextricably tied to Jesus. He was indeed commissioned by God (John 1:6), and *filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb* (Lk 1:15), to prepare the way of Christ (Mat 3:3). He introduces Christ to us as the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Mat 3:11) - a clear declaration of Jesus as the Mediator of the New Covenant. He was sent "*to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe*" (John 1:7). In short, he preached Christ and baptized those who repented and believed.

Many insist that John's baptism was not "Christian". They point to the "disciples" of John the Baptist in Acts 19 who were re-baptized. However, Apollos, in the preceding paragraphs was also a disciple of John who was instructed in *the way* (vv 25, 26; 9:2) of God, fervent in spirit, and who taught *accurately* the things of the Lord. He simply had not received the fuller revelation of the Apostles, and especially of Paul. Therefore, Aquila and Priscilla explained to him "the way" more perfectly. There is no mention of him being re-baptized. The "disciples" in Ephesus, however, never understood John's preaching (if they ever heard it). They didn't even know about the Holy Spirit; yet, *John always preached Christ as the One who baptizes with the Spirit*; this was the core of his message. So when Paul told them that John preached repentance and faith in Christ, they understood and were baptized in truth.

Have you been baptized according to truth? ●ejr3

The Timbrel & Dance Weekly is published by Pastor Ed Ross, Springwood Chapel, 2360 Springwood Road, York, Pennsylvania 17402. Phone: 717-741-3616 Email: pastored@springwoodchapel.com Visit us at SpringwoodChapel.com Also available at ChristMyCovenant.com Unaltered non-commercial republication of any content permitted.