**Who was Melchizedek?**

**By Got Guestions**

Melchizedek, whose name means “king of righteousness,” was a king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God ([Genesis 14:18–20](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2014.18%E2%80%9320); [Psalm 110:4](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%20110.4); [Hebrews 5:6–11](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%205.6%E2%80%9311); [6:20—7:28](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%206.20%E2%80%947.28)). Melchizedek’s sudden appearance and disappearance in the book of Genesis is somewhat mysterious. Melchizedek and Abraham first met after Abraham’s defeat of Chedorlaomer and his three allies. Melchizedek presented bread and wine to Abraham and his weary men, demonstrating friendship. He bestowed a blessing on Abraham in the name of *El Elyon* (“God Most High”) and praised God for giving Abraham a victory in battle ([Genesis 14:18–20](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2014.18%E2%80%9320)).

Abraham presented Melchizedek with a tithe (a tenth) of all the items he had gathered. By this act Abraham indicated that he recognized Melchizedek as a priest who ranked higher spiritually than he.

In [Psalm 110](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%20110), a messianic psalm written by David ([Matthew 22:43](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matthew%2022.43)), Melchizedek is presented as a type of Christ. This theme is repeated in the book of Hebrews, where both Melchizedek and Christ are considered kings of righteousness and peace. By citing Melchizedek and his unique priesthood as a type, the writer shows that Christ’s new priesthood is superior to the old levitical order and the priesthood of Aaron ([Hebrews 7:1–10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%207.1%E2%80%9310)).

Some propose that Melchizedek was actually a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, or a [Christophany](http://www.gotquestions.org/theophany-Christophany.html). This is a possible theory, given that Abraham had received such a visit before. Consider [Genesis 17](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2017) where Abraham saw and spoke with the Lord (*El Shaddai*) in the form of a man.

[Hebrews 6:20](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%206.20) says, “[Jesus] has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” This term *order* would ordinarily indicate a succession of priests holding the office. None are ever mentioned, however, in the long interval from Melchizedek to Christ, an anomaly that can be solved by assuming that Melchizedek and Christ are really the same person. Thus the “order” is eternally vested in Him and Him alone.

[Hebrews 7:3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hebrews%207.3) says that Melchizedek was “without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.” The question is whether the author of Hebrews means this *actually* or *figuratively*.

If the description in Hebrews is literal, then it is indeed difficult to see how it could be properly applied to anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ. No mere earthly king “remains a priest forever,” and no mere human is “without father or mother.” If [Genesis 14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2014) describes a theophany, then God the Son came to give Abraham His blessing ([Genesis 14:17–19](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2014.17%E2%80%9319)), appearing as the King of Righteousness ([Revelation 19:11](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Revelation%2019.11),[16](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Revelation%2019.16)), the King of Peace ([Isaiah 9:6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isaiah%209.6)), and the Mediator between God and Man ([1 Timothy 2:5](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%202.5)).

If the description of Melchizedek is figurative, then the details of having no genealogy, no beginning or ending, and a ceaseless ministry are simply statements accentuating the mysterious nature of the person who met Abraham. In this case, the silence in the Genesis account concerning these details is purposeful and better serves to link Melchizedek with Christ.

Are Melchizedek and Jesus the same person? A case can be made either way. At the very least, Melchizedek is a type of Christ, prefiguring the Lord’s ministry. But it is also possible that Abraham, after his weary battle, met and gave honor to the Lord Jesus Himself.

[Got Questions - Who was Melchizedek?](http://www.gotquestions.org/Melchizedek.html)