

MELCHIZEDEK – Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D. – 2008

Shem received the patriarchal *blessing* from his father, Noah (Gen. 9:26), thus setting him above his brothers as the great patriarch of the post-Flood age. Hence, when Noah died, Shem (already the direct lineage to the Messiah since birth) would have become the spiritual head or *priest* over the entire family of man – all that were born after the Flood. Why then is not this man mentioned again in the biblical narrative? He is, but only by his priestly name – Melchizedek! But if so, what about:

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. (Hebrews 7:3)

This refers to the *priesthood* he represents, not to him personally. Proof: six times in the Book of Hebrews we read: “*the order of Melchizedek*” (5:6 & 10, 6:20, 7:11, 17, & 21). The emphasis here is that, unlike Aaron’s, Melchizedek’s Priesthood is not based on *descent* (i.e., lineage or ancestry).

As with Jesus – as to His *eternal* Deity (Micah 5:2; Col. 1:16), He had: no father (not eternally begotten as a son: Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5-6; a son “this day” means begotten *in time*: “shall & will” = future tense, not eternity past - yet was always Creator), no mother, no beginning, no descent, or end of life.

But as to Christ’s humanity — His “father” was Joseph, His mother was Mary: He was born in Bethlehem, His descent is in Luke 3:23-38 & Mat. 1:1-17, and His life ended...for 3 days.

Shem: as a man — his father was Noah, his mother was Noah’s wife (Gen. 7:7), and his descent is given in Genesis 5. Yet he couldn’t prove any of this at the time of the Genesis 14 account for Noah and his wife were long dead: the Flood had destroyed all the records. Moreover, it was about 460 years *before* Moses wrote the Law (Deut. 31:9).

So as to his priesthood — there is neither clear proof of his lineage, nor of his birth or death dates!

Being a man, Melchizedek (Shem’s *priestly* name) did have a descent (Gen. 5), but it is not reckoned from the priestly Levitical descent as Hebrews 7:6a shows:

But he whose descent is not counted from them...(i.e., from the sons of Levi: see context in vs. 5)

Moreover, Hebrews 7:15 shows that Melchizedek *cannot* be Messiah Jesus:

And it is yet far more evident: for...after **the similitude** of Melchizedek there ariseth **another** priest

This other priest is said to only be in the “*likeness*” (similitude) of Melchizedek – not Melchizedek. Furthermore, Jesus is said to be “*another*” priest; thus, He is *not* Melchizedek! Melchizedek was “made like the Son of God” (vs. 3) in the sense that his *priesthood* continued without interruption.

Note: Genesis 14:18 sets Melchizedek completely above and apart as he is called “*the*” priest of God and not merely “*a*” priest! Moreover, by personally receiving tithes from Abraham, Melchizedek is shown to be completely human. Celestial beings have no use whatever for tithes.

Further, Shem’s remarkable *longevity* — he lived 98 years before the Flood and though life spans greatly shortened after the Flood his life extended into the *10th generation* after it – all the way to Isaac’s 50th year. Indeed, he lived 66 years past the time when Abraham (then 84) met Melchizedek (age c.534!). To the people of his day, it would have seemed he just would not die – to them, he seemed to ever live.

Moreover, a genealogy was absolutely *essential* to the Levitical priesthood (Ezra 2:62; Neh. 7:64). The order of Aaron completely depended on lineal descent along with a genealogy as proof. But at the time he met Abraham, Shem could offer no proof of his descent for Noah had been dead for over 80 years, and the Flood would have destroyed all such records. Thus, he could neither document his parentage nor his lineal descent (Heb. 7:3).

By contrast: Aaron’s sons could not: (1) prove themselves a Levitical priest without a genealogy, (2) claim to have an *eternal* ministry {because they died, Heb.7:23}, or (3) prove themselves both priests and *kings*.

Finally: it was not until the *resurrection*, when Jesus received His glorified body, that He met the qualification of having an “endless life” (“forever”). Only then did He become a priest of the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:3, 16–17) and that priesthood is the inheritance of all the reborn! (Rev. 1:5-6, 5:10)