

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 07: 01-03

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we are going to read Hebrews Chapter 7, and today we will read verses 1 to 3.

In Leviticus 9, Moses, according to God's command, established Aaron as the high priest. When Moses and Aaron came out of the tabernacle to bless the people, Leviticus 9:23-24 records the glorious scene: "Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces." From that moment on, the ministry of the Aaronic priesthood became an important part of Israelite's life. The priests acted as mediators between God and the people, helping the Israelites offer sacrifices to God, covering their sins and the difficulties caused by sin, so that they could be accepted by God.

The ministry of the Aaronic priesthood foreshadowed the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. However, Aaron offered bulls and lambs as sacrifices, and their blood could only temporarily cover sins; whereas Jesus offered His own body as a sacrifice, once and for all, removing sin and the barriers sin caused. On this matter, the apostles of the New Testament, Paul, Peter, and John had the same insight, and they expressed this truth abundantly in their writings. When the author of Hebrews sought to demonstrate that Christ, as High Priest, was superior to Aaron, he introduced a completely new concept, stating that Christ serves as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This was a revelation that the other apostles did not have, making it one of the most outstanding contributions of the author of Hebrews.

Although we are unsure of the author's identity, he intentionally concealed himself so as not to diminish Christ's glory. In the New Jerusalem, we will still honor the author of Hebrews, because by using Melchizedek's priesthood to prefigure Christ's heavenly ministry, he greatly enriched our understanding and experience of Christ.

Melchizedek appears thirteen times in the Bible, ten of which are in the New Testament, all in Hebrews chapters 5–7, where it is taught that Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This unique insight belongs exclusively to the author of Hebrews. Melchizedek appears only three times in the Old Testament, with the first two occurrences in Genesis 14. The background of Genesis 14 is that Abraham rescued Lot, defeated Chedorlaomer, and returned to Canaan. Then Melchizedek suddenly appeared.

Genesis 14:18 states that Melchizedek brought out bread and wine to meet Abraham and blessed him. In Genesis 14:20, Abraham then gave him a tenth of everything. In Genesis 14, Melchizedek appeared suddenly and then disappeared without a trace. It was not until about a thousand years later that David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote in Psalm 110:4, "The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" Psalm 110 is a Messianic psalm, so this verse naturally connects to Christ.

We thank the Lord that He gave the author of Hebrews special inspiration. With such limited Old Testament references, he was able to depict Christ's priestly ministry in such a rich and transcendent way. May we learn to follow his example, carefully examining every word and detail in Scripture, discovering profound truths from even the smallest passages. If we read the Bible with such diligence, the Holy Spirit will grant us insight, making Bible reading not a burdensome task but a journey of discovering treasures. As we read, we will encounter surprises everywhere, gaining new revelations and experiences.

Verse 1: "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him."

The author begins by quoting Genesis 14:18-19, which recounts how Abraham rescued Lot, defeated the four kings, and brought back the captives and possessions to Canaan. As he passed through the Valley of Shaveh, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, brought out bread and wine to meet Abraham and blessed him. This is recorded in Genesis 14. Genesis is the first book of the Torah, which every Israelite

studied from childhood. Many Bible scholars and teachers have read it, yet no one paid attention to this mysterious figure—Melchizedek. It was not until a thousand years later, when David wrote Psalm 110 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that he recognized Melchizedek's priestly role.

According to the Law of Moses, priests could only come from the Aaronic family of the tribe of Levi. However, Melchizedek lived in the same era as Abraham and was already a priest of the Most High God. This indicates that he was an extraordinary figure. A thousand years later, David, under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, declared that one would be a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. David's insight was also unique, but his declaration did not receive much response.

The ministry of the Aaronic priesthood continued for nearly a thousand years until the New Testament period, when the author of Hebrews finally expounded the truth that Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. He returned to Genesis 14, noting that Melchizedek was both the king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God. Melchizedek had a dual identity—he was both a king and a priest—something that was not permitted under the Mosaic Law.

Uzziah, a good king of Judah, did what was right in the sight of the Lord and brought prosperity to the nation. However, after becoming strong, he became proud and sought to burn incense in the temple, a duty reserved for priests. Although many priests tried to stop him, Uzziah ignored them and insisted on entering the temple to burn incense. 2 Chronicles 26:19 records: "Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar." We see that God did not allow King Uzziah to act presumptuously. He immediately struck him with leprosy, and Uzziah remained isolated until his death.

Under the Law of Moses, the roles of king and priest were separate. However, Melchizedek possessed both identities. A king represents God before the people, governing them, while a priest represents the people before God, offering sacrifices and serving Him. The only One in the universe who can represent both God and

humanity—the God-man—is Jesus Christ. Thus, Melchizedek in the Old Testament is a perfect foreshadowing of Christ.

The author of Hebrews had an unprecedented perspective. He not only saw the dual identity of Melchizedek as both king and priest, but he also quoted Psalm 110:4, stating that Christ is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. With such limited scripture, he developed the profound truth that Christ is the eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek—this spiritual insight is truly admirable.

Next, the author defines Christ's ministry as High Priest according to Melchizedek's ministry to Abraham in Genesis 14. Melchizedek came out with bread and wine to meet Abraham after his victory in battle, strengthening him in his weariness and blessing him, saying, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth".

In the same way, today, on every Lord's Day, the New Testament saints stand in the position of resurrection to offer worship and praise to God. Likewise, Christ serves each saint with His bread and cup, enabling us to receive His strength in our weakness, His support in our failures, and to stand again in His victorious position, offering worship and praise to God together.

This is the very feast that the Lord Jesus Christ personally instituted during His last supper with His disciples on earth. He took bread and said, "This is My body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." He also took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20). Today, Christ is seated in the heavenly Holy of Holies, and He continues to serve His church with the bread and the cup.

He also blesses the church. In Luke 24:50-53, it says, "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." This was the blessing Jesus gave to His disciples before His ascension. Though He was taken up into heaven, He continues

to bless the saints from heaven, and the saints, in every church, continue to praise and bless God. What a beautiful picture this is!

Verse 2: "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated 'king of righteousness,' and then also king of Salem, meaning 'king of peace.'"

Christ today, according to the order of Melchizedek, is our great High Priest. He provides bread and wine to the saints and blesses them, just as Melchizedek did for Abraham. Abraham's response was to take a tenth of what he had gained from battle and give it to Melchizedek. Not only that, but he also returned all the recovered possessions to the king of Sodom. He declared to the king of Sodom, as recorded in Genesis 14:22-23, "But Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.''" What a magnificent declaration!

Through the blessing and provision of Melchizedek, Abraham came to recognize that the One he followed was the Lord of heaven and earth, the Most High God. Everything in heaven and earth belongs to God. If one follows such a great God, how could there be any lack? Thus, he declared to the king of this world, "I will not take even a thread or a sandal strap from you, lest you boast over me." It is God who makes me rich; everything I have is from Him. Therefore, I willingly take a tenth to offer to God, expressing my gratitude and devotion.

Dear brothers and sisters, our father of faith set a wonderful example for us. May we also follow and learn from him. The name Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness." The Chinese Union Version translates it as "仁義王", but this translation is not entirely accurate because "benevolence" (仁) and "righteousness" (義) are two distinct concepts in Chinese. Combining them may create confusion. The English word righteousness is better translated as 公義.

Therefore, I believe "King of Righteousness" (公義王) is a more appropriate translation. Melchizedek, on one hand, is the King of Righteousness, signifying that his kingship is founded on righteousness. His rule is based on righteousness—everything is fair and upright, with no crookedness or injustice whatsoever. On the other hand, he is also called the King of Salem. The word "Salem" means "peace." The place where Melchizedek reigned is today's Jerusalem, though at that time, it was called Salem. It was not until the time of David that it developed into Jerusalem.

The meaning of "Jerusalem" is "foundation of peace." In 2 Samuel 5:5, we see that when David became king, he captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, "In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah." It was only when David reigned in Jerusalem that he became the king of all twelve tribes of Israel. However, later in David's life, when he sinned by numbering the people, God sent a plague upon Israel. Seventy thousand Israelites perished in a short time.

When the angel of the Lord stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, David, clothed in sackcloth, repented and prayed. Then the angel of the Lord commanded the prophet Gad to tell David to build an altar and offer sacrifices at the threshing floor of Ornan. 1 Chronicles 21:25-26 records, "So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering." This land later became the site of the temple. It was here that the foundation of God's peace was laid on earth.

From this event, we see that Melchizedek, as the King of Peace, was God's priest, bringing God's peace. A thousand years later, David confirmed the location of the temple, establishing Jerusalem as the foundation of peace, a city with God's presence, a testimony of God. Another thousand years later, the Son of God, Jesus, came to Jerusalem. He pointed to the temple and declared in John 2:19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Jesus was speaking of His own body as the temple. Today, the church is the body of Christ.

It turns out that Melchizedek's name was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ. Christ first fulfilled the role of the King of Righteousness—He accomplished redemption on the cross and satisfied God's requirement of righteousness. Then, three days later, He rose from the dead, so that all who believe in Him may be justified before God. Indeed, He is the King of Righteousness. But He is also the King of Peace. Within the church, He has established a foundation of peace, bringing peace between God and humanity.

Verse 3: "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."

Melchizedek is truly a mysterious figure—without father, without mother, without genealogy. There is no record of him in human historical books. It is unknown from whom he was born or whether he had any descendants. He is described as having neither beginning of days nor end of life, with no record of when he was born or when he died. In the Bible, for those who are part of the lineage of life, their births, deaths, and descendants are all clearly recorded. Before the flood, these records are found in Genesis 5, and after the flood, they are recorded in Genesis 11. Furthermore, 1 Chronicles 1–10 provides a detailed genealogy of the Israelites, tracing all the way to David.

In the New Testament, Matthew 1 extends Israel's genealogy to Jesus. Yet throughout the entire Bible, Melchizedek is uniquely special—God has intentionally preserved him as a mysterious figure. The book of Hebrews states that he is "made like the Son of God." Since it says "like," it indicates that he is not the Son of God, but rather, someone whom God specifically used as a type of His Son, Jesus Christ. Many biblical scholars have spent time studying and researching, attempting to determine exactly who Melchizedek was, leading to various speculations.

I admire their efforts, yet in this matter, I would rather rest in God's will, preserving the mystery of Melchizedek without excessive speculation. For the true purpose of

every typology is to direct our focus to the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He is the true King of Righteousness, the true King of Peace, and the eternal High Priest.

Let us pray together: Lord, we give You thanks and worship for the author of Hebrews. With limited words, he was able to expound on Christ being the eternal High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This has enriched our understanding of Christ's heavenly ministry. Lord, we ask You to help us not only to have this vision but also to enter into its experience—that in our daily lives, we may receive Christ's priestly ministry. May we, through Christ's daily supply, be strengthened to walk on the path of life, that our spiritual life may grow, our gifts be perfected, and we may serve faithfully in God's house, bringing about the soon return of Christ. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ. Amen!