

THE MINISTRY OF MELCHIZEDEK

David Baker, prepared for word ministry, 9 May 2021

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Introduction

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the second session in our series on 'The Seventy Weeks prophecy'.

In our first session, we made the point that *the central feature* of the Seventy Weeks prophecy is the *one offering of Christ*.

All of the elements, or outcomes, that are nominated in the prophecy - to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy - have been *fully accomplished by Christ in His one offering*.

He is now ministering to us our *daily participation* in that finished work.

The ministry of Christ as Melchizedek

Today, we will continue to consider, and to build upon, that key point. Our focus in this session is that we have a participation in the finished work of Christ *because* He is our great High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

The ministry of Christ as Melchizedek is the central theme of the book of Hebrews.

Paul spent many chapters discussing the detail of this point. Helpfully, to ensure that we don't lose 'the wood for the trees', having looked at all of the detail, he helpfully took a step back and summarised the main point for us.

He wrote, 'Now this is the main point of the things which we are saying: we have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.' Heb 8:1.

The importance of the book of Hebrews to Bible prophecy

I want to make the point in passing, as we orient ourselves to this subject, that we need to appreciate how important and significant the book of Hebrews is to Bible prophecy.

The book of Hebrews is the *interpretative key* to the book of Revelation.

Considering that the book of Daniel is the companion to, and the prelude to, the book of

Revelation, it is not surprising that the book of Hebrews is also the interpretative *key* for the Seventy Weeks prophecy in the book of Daniel.

This may be a new point for us, but I am sure that, as we continue to consider the Seventy Weeks prophecy, this point will become more and more apparent to us, and we will see how significant the book of Hebrews is.

Christ introduces Himself in the book of Revelation

We will begin by going to the book of Revelation where, in Chapter 1, we read that Christ is actively ministering to us as our great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, from His seated position in the Father's throne.

This is the personal introduction of Jesus Christ.

Sonseekers, hopefully this verse is red in your Bible, because this is Jesus Himself speaking. John has already given his introduction, and this is the personal introduction of Jesus Christ.

Christ – the Alpha and the Omega; the Beginning and the End

He said, 'I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come [or who is coming], the Almighty.'

Now, 'I AM' – 'I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega*' – is the most fundamental revelation of His identity.

He is *before all things*.

When Moses said to Him at the burning bush, 'Who will I say has sent me?', He said to him, 'I AM who I am.'

And He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you".' Exo 3:14.

I AM is not bound by space, time, or eternity.

Now, time is very important for us, and time has been sanctified for us by the Holy Spirit; it is for our sake - but time has *a beginning and an end*.

In contrast to that, eternity, which has also been created by God for our sake, has *a beginning but no end*.

Christ meets us 'in time'

I AM has no beginning, and no end.

So, what does it mean when I AM said, 'I am the Beginning and the End'?

Even though I AM is outside of time and eternity, *He meets us, in time*, for the sake of establishing *the ground of fellowship with us*.

So, when He reveals Himself to be I AM, He is saying to us, 'I am *here now* to meet you.'

For example, I AM met Abraham as Melchizedek when he returned from the battle of the kings, for the sake of blessing him in the context of an *agape* meal. This is Melchizedek, who has neither the beginning of days nor end of life, but He met Abraham in time and blessed him in the context of an *agape* meal.

He met Abraham again, as we know, and said, 'I am your shield', meaning 'I am your *faith*, your exceeding great reward'. He said to him, 'I will become your Son, and you will be blessed by receiving My life in the fellowship of My offering.'

So, at the appointed time, I AM was born in the lineage of Abraham as the Son of Man.

Christ brought all things to an end in His death; and made all things new

He partook of our flesh and blood for the purpose of joining us in our death; and that was to bring to an end what needs to be finished; to join us in our death, so that we can be included in His death.

But His death is the beginning of all things *new*.

In this way, Jesus Christ, as I AM, emptied and humbled Himself to become the beginning and the end. He said, 'I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord.'

Now, the meaning of *Alpha* and *Omega* is more than its being the first letter of the Greek alphabet and the last letter of the Greek alphabet, so that He encompasses all things. Now, that is absolutely true.

However, when He said, 'I am the Beginning and the End', it means that He filled all things as the Son of Man, to become *the end* of the old creation and *the beginning* of the new creation.

So, in saying, 'I am the Beginning and the End', it illustrates for us the two 'sides' of the cross – His offering.

The descending and ascending journey of Christ

In order to understand what it means for Christ to be the beginning of the new creation, and the end of the old creation, we need to consider His *ascending* and *descending* journey.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul explained that when Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, He *descended* into the lower parts of the earth and *ascended* far above all the heavens.

'Now this, "HE ASCENDED" – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.' Eph 4:9-10.

We see that His ascending and His descending occurred together, but His ascending was predicated upon His descending, because He ascended by resurrection life.

The first dimension of how Christ filled all things in His physical body, as the Son of Man, was by His descending to the lowest parts of the earth to suffer the *eternal judgement of God* upon *our* iniquity and sin.

The second dimension of how Christ filled all things, as the Son of Man, was by ascending far above all the heavens.

We do need to appreciate that He did this as the Son of Man.

He is Yahweh the Son, and He is the Son of God, but He filled all things *as the Son of Man*; this is as the Son of Abraham. He did this in *His physical body*, in His offering.

Christ descended to the lowest parts of the earth to suffer eternal judgement

His descending journey began in the garden of Gethsemane when the Father joined the whole of humanity to Him so that His physical body became 'the body of sin'.

From the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, Christ then suffered at the hands of *wicked men* and under the assault of the spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly places. He suffered at the hands of *the religious leaders* in the court of Caiaphas. He then suffered at the hands of *the rulers of the world* before Pilate and Herod, and of all of the soldiers who were under their command.

Then He suffered the full assault of the *spiritual host of wickedness* in heavenly places when He was lifted up on the cross.

Christ disarmed and conquered all His enemies

Significantly, as Christ descended by suffering at the hands of wicked men and the spiritual host of wickedness, *He disarmed and conquered all of His enemies.*

So, as these leaders and rulers abused Christ, *their authority was removed from them.* They were disempowered and conquered by Christ as *the obedient Slave to the Father.*

Christ did not conquer His enemies by overpowering them. He *conquered* His enemies by *suffering* at their hands – and this is a most remarkable point.

By midday on the day of His crucifixion, Christ had descended to the depths of the fallen human condition for the sake of our redemption. He then took the entire old creation, including the whole of fallen humanity, out into the darkness of eternal exclusion from God.

This is why *a great darkness* covered the whole face of the earth during those three hours. During the three hours of great darkness on the cross, He suffered *the fullness of the eternal judgement of God* upon our iniquity and sin.

We could say this another way – there is nothing that the ungodly will experience in the lake of fire forever (for an ageless age of years) that Jesus Christ did not experience in His physical body while He hung on the cross during those three hours.

So, no person is *ever* able to say, ‘You don’t know how I feel.’

He stooped to the lowest degree of the lake of fire to fill all things in relation to our everlasting judgement.

Now, that is a remarkable point in its own right. However, when Paul said, ‘the lowest parts of the earth’, he was referring to something *even lower* than the lake of fire; even lower than filling all things in relation to our everlasting judgement.

The reproach that the Father laid upon the Son took Him to the end of, and then beyond, the eternal dimension of the lake of fire.

Christ brought our judgement to and end

He exhausted its judgement by the power of Eternal Spirit, and *brought our judgement to an end*, or to a finish.

This is I AM, the End!

This is an amazing point. This is why the ‘worm of corruption that does not die’ is able to be circumcised from our hearts; meaning it is completely removed, completely cut off, *completely finished*, in the fellowship of His offering.

Christ learned our obedience; fulfilled our righteousness

His ascending journey also commenced in the garden of Gethsemane when He began to sweat clots of blood from every pore of His physical body.

As He prayed to the Father, ‘Not My will, but Yours, be done’, it was the confession of His faith obedience.

From the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, He willingly offered Himself to the Father, and obediently laid down His life for us. So, He is offering Himself to God, and *for us.*

Every wounding event that He suffered caused His blood to be shed. The resurrection life of God, in His blood, brought Him back from the death of our sin.

From the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, He learned *our obedience*, and *fulfilled our righteousness* as sons of God.

The two sides of the cross

So, when Jesus proclaimed, ‘It is finished!’, on the cross, He had filled all things, in both directions, as the Son of Man. He had suffered our eternal *judgement* as sons of perdition, and He had also fulfilled our *righteousness* as sons of God; and both of these elements are true together. These are the two ‘sides’ of the cross.

The physical death of Christ was a pure and undefiled offering as He committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father.

He was received by the Father into His bosom, and was seated upon His throne. He took His seat upon the throne of grace. So, Christ was enthroned with the Father, seated in the throne of grace, while His body still hung on the cross.

This means that the blood, the water and the spirit of grace and supplication that flowed from His

heart, when the soldier pierced His side, were coming from the throne of grace.

It was a *fountain* for the *cleansing of our sin* and uncleanness as we participate in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

However, more than this, it was a *fountain of everlasting life*. The resurrection life of God that flows from the offering of Christ is an everlasting stream; it is a river.

When the apostle John was shown the administration of the new heavens and the new earth, he saw the river of the water of life as clear as crystal coming from the throne of God. That is the throne of God the Father, and the Lamb.

This was the same everlasting fountain of life that flowed from the heart of Christ while He still hung on the cross. It came from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And this is the fruit of His offering.

Where is the blood of Christ?

I will make an obvious point regarding the offering of Christ. The blood and the water from the side of Christ did not run forever. It flowed from His body; it hit the dirt; and then it came to an end. And they took His body down from the cross, wrapped it up and laid it in the tomb.

So, how is the fruit of Christ's wounded heart an everlasting stream? We could ask this question in a different way: 'Where is the blood of Christ?' We know that we do not look for it in the dirt at the foot of the cross.

We know that He did not take it with Him to heaven.

And we also know that it was not in His veins when He was resurrected from the dead. To the disciples, He described His resurrection body, His immortal body, as flesh and bone – but no blood.

The reason that the blood and water from the heart of Christ is an everlasting stream, or an everlasting fountain, is that the Father has glorified Jesus Christ to be our great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

This is the key point. 'Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience [speaking about our obedience; He learned our obedience] by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected [or having finished the work; having filled all things; having become the end of the old creation and the

beginning of the new], He became the author [or the source] of [our] eternal salvation to all who obey Him.' Heb 5:8-9. So, *obedience* is very important here.

This is our key point. 'Having been' or 'called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek".' Heb 5:10.

Christ is the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him

Paul was saying to us that He is the source of our eternal salvation for all those who obey Him, because He is our great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. And He forever lives to minister to us *our participation in His finished work*.

So, He did not need to hang on the cross forever. Rather, He forever lives to minister to us our participation in that finished work. This is why the order of Melchizedek is the power of an endless life.

Do not be afraid; I am your faith

'"I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come [or who is coming], the Almighty".' Rev 1:8.

Now, there are two parts to this verse. The first part is 'I am the Beginning and the End'. The companion to this first part is in verse 17 - 'I am the *Alpha* and the *Omega*'. This is after John turned and saw Christ ministering among His lampstand churches.

He said, 'And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last".'

Now, we know this is the same word that He proclaimed to Abraham when He said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.' When He said to Abraham, 'I am your shield', He was saying, 'I am your faith.'

He made exactly the same point here when He said, 'I am the Beginning and the End.' He was saying, 'I am the beginning and the end *of your faith*.' Remember that Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

So, the faith that we receive is the faith of the Son of Man who filled all things as the Beginning and the End. He gathered the whole course of our life, from beginning to end, into His one offering.

A beginning and an end for each day as we walk in fellowship with Him

In the fellowship of His offering, there is a beginning and an end for each day. We know that His mercies are new every morning.

When I say that there is a beginning and an end for each day, it is more than the fact that we wake up in the morning and that is the beginning; and we close our eyes at night and that is the end. Now, that is true, and that day is a gift from Him.

However, within the context of that day, and the beginning and the end of that day, He is also saying to us, and this is a word of faith, 'I am the Beginning and the End. There is a beginning and there is an end for you every day.'

Christ ministers our participation in His finished offering each day; bringing things to an end and birthing His life in us

And He is saying that, in each and every day as we walk with Him, and He ministers to us our participation in His finished offering, He is bringing certain things to *an end*. They are being circumcised from us, and they are gone; they are finished.

At the same time, He is also bringing *His life to birth in us*. His love is being poured into our heart through the Holy Spirit. And this is something altogether new!

He is saying to us, as a word of faith, 'There is a beginning and there is an end for you, each and every day, as you walk with Me in the fellowship of My offering.'

We will continue to read in verse 18; this is the companion to the second half of verse 8, where the Lord described Himself as He 'who is and who was and who is to come'.

Now, we know that we can apply that statement to both the Father and the Son. Today I am looking at it from the perspective of the Son. And, where He said, in verse 18, 'I am He who lives', that is He 'who is and was' dead; that is Him who 'was'.

'And behold, I am alive forevermore [that is He who is *coming*]. Amen.'

Whenever we read *Amen*, we know that it is a summary statement. So, in summary, He was saying, 'I am He who lives', so He is I AM; He is outside of time and eternity.

And then 'and was dead' - He emptied and humbled Himself to the point of death. And this was 'in time', to become *the end of the old creation* and *the beginning of the new creation*, for our sake. And this work is finished.

Melchizedek: Behold, I am alive forevermore

Then He said, 'And behold, I am alive forevermore'; this is Him who is *coming*. He is Melchizedek, who forever lives to minister to us our participation in His finished work. When Jesus said, 'Behold, I am alive forevermore', He was proclaiming that He is Melchizedek.

Paul said, concerning Melchizedek, He is '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.' Heb 7:3.

Then he said, 'Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives [this is 'behold, I am alive forevermore'] to make intercession for them.' Heb 7:25.

Jesus commanded John to 'behold', *because* we all need to see, by illumination, that we have such a High Priest. Remember, Paul said, 'This is the main point ... we have such a High Priest.'

And Jesus said to John, 'Behold, I am alive forevermore', because He wants us to see that we have such a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. We need *illumination* to behold this, because His ministry as Melchizedek toward us transcends every reference point that we naturally have in this world.

When we see this, this becomes our new reference point; this is our 'sure hope' in the holy place.

Jesus really 'drove this point home' in one of His discussions with the Jews when He said, 'You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.' Joh 8:23.

'Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM [and we could say, if you do not believe that I am Melchizedek, then] you will die in your sins.' Joh 8:24.

Jesus was saying that if we do not believe that He is I AM, who forever lives to join us to the fellowship of His one offering, then we will die in our sins, because that is the only context where the

other law is circumcised from our heart, and where we are delivered from the power and the bondage of sin.

It is also the only context where we receive His resurrection life, which is an everlasting stream for us.

Our participation in the offering of Christ will continue for eternity

At the conclusion of our natural lifetime, our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ *as a circumcising operation* in our lives will come to an end. There does come a time when there is no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain.

However, our *fellowship* in the offering of Christ will *never* come to an end.

The offering of Christ happened *in time*, but it is efficacious for eternity, because of the priesthood of Christ. This is the point we have been making through this session. Our participation in the offering of Christ will continue for eternity because Jesus Christ has been glorified as our great High Priest forever. Our eternal participation in the offering of Christ means that the righteousness of God will increase for ever and ever in the new heavens and the new earth.

In our next session we will begin to consider the six outcomes of the prophecy in more detail.