

Problem of



Prof. M. M. Ninan

San Jose, CA 95124

2003

Problem of



Prof. M. M. Ninan

Chapter One

Melkizedec, Salem, and El Elyon

Gen 14:18 And Mel-chiz'edek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High.

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth;

Gen 14:20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

What is in a Name?.

Mel-kiz'e-dek, (malki-tsedheq, "Tsedheq, or Tsidhiq is my king" or "King Righteous") (Gen 14:18-20; Psa 110:4); Melchisedek (Heb 5:6, Heb 5:10; Heb 6:20; Heb 7:1, Heb 7:10-11, Heb 7:15, Heb 7:17): The name is explained in Heb 7:2 as "king of righteousness."

Some others propose that "Melchizedek" means "My god is Zedek." Zedek was the name of another Canaanite/Phoenician deity worshipped at the time of Abram. Then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

We can look upon the name in two ways

1. Metaphorical

(1) The name "Melchizedek" may not be a proper name at all, but a metaphoric title. "Melchizedek" translated means "Legitimate King," "the Rightful King" or "Righteous King."

The word "Salem" translated, simply means "peace."

It may, therefore also be hypothesized that Melchizedek was not literally the king of the city of Jerusalem, but was metaphorically the "King of Peace," a title like Isaiah's "Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9.6) Some have even suggested that since Melchizedek is called "The King of Peace," Melchizedek was the "Father" of the "Prince of Peace." The very attempt of Heb 7 indicates that the names are allegorical and amenable to spiritual interpretation.

These are however spiritualization of a historical figure. Paul is the only person in the Bible

who does this type of interpretation. Apparently this was a common practice among the Jewish Rabbianic hermeneutics. However one should be very careful in pushing the analogies too far that it violates the historical significance and meaning. Hebrew however do not push the matter beyond the implication of the meaning of the names.

2. Real Person

Melchizedek however was a real person who met Abram in Gen 14.18 and he was indeed the King of the city of Salem – a real city. Josephus, states that Salem was later renamed Jerusalem. Then Melchizedek reigned as the king of the city of Jerusalem during the days of Abram.

Melchizedek was king of Salem (= Jerusalem) and "a priest unto 'Most High God'".

El Elyon

Abraham came from Ur, a city in Sumer west of the Euphrates. Abraham and his father were pagans. They worshipped Sumerian gods: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors-Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor... served other gods." (Joshua 24:2) For the first seventy-five years of his life Abraham worshipped "other gods": Sumerian gods. Then, God called him out of his family and out of his country.

But then when he arrives in Canaan, he meets Melchizedec the Priest of the God who called him out. Who was El? El was the highest god of the Canaanite pantheon. He is mentioned in numerous passages of the Ugaritic texts. The Ugaritic texts were written ca. 1400 BC. They were discovered in modern Syria. Abraham discovered God in Haran, Syria, and then moved to Canaan.

Gen. 14:19,22 identifies El Elyon as 'possessor' of all the earth. The RSV follows the LXX (Septuagint) 'ektisen' 'who created.' This perspective clearly precludes El from being considered a nature deity (e.g. Baal), and stresses his total supremacy. Psalm 78:35 (cf Num. 24:16) follows this with El Elyon as the most exalted one. It is translated as "Most High God". Translated in the Dravidian language it becomes Parameshwara or Maheswara which was the oldest God of the Dravidians who was later identified as Siva.

Zedek is the name of the planet Jupiter in Hebrew, and Jupiter is the God of Heaven (Zeus to the Greeks and Dyaus Pitar to the early Aryans), the reading is equally "My king is the God of Heaven," that is the Persian god, Ahuramazda. It also allows Yehouah to be granted the title El Elyon, illustrating the syncretistic nature of the bible and the syncretistic intent of the Persians in propagating it. El Elyon was the name used by the Phoenicians of their high gods. Phoenicians were also Hebrews—they too lived in Abarnahara! In an equal way, Yehouah is called, by Abraham, El Shaddai

("Almighty"), drawing in to His worship some other group of Hebrews, and in *Psalms* 91:1 El Elyon and El Shaddai are joined in poetic parallel to equate the two titles.

El is descended from Mesopotamian religion. He was the high god of a pantheon like the Sumerian god An and the Babylonian god Anu. He was remote and his main function may be described as an executive ruler who employed his sons to execute his decrees. The essential concern of this Aramean high god was social justice. Of subordinate rank but of prime importance was Hadad, who was the focus of worship as he was an intermediary god between the Arameans and El.

When the Arameans left Syria, they left Hadad behind. In Palestine, they encountered El and Baal who were both the same and different from the gods they worshipped. We cannot tell to what extent they equated Canaanite religion with their own. We have no indication that any other god was of importance to them. El is the focus of their earliest traditions. It was El himself who appeared to Jacob at Penuel and El is the god named at four known cult sites--Bethel, Penuel, El Berith and for the altar named "El is the god of Israel. El behaves as if he has taken on the role of the abandoned Hadad. When Jacob took its new name, this was the El it described and this was the El it worshipped until it was destroyed by the Assyrians.

An indigenous version of El religion is found at pre-Davidic Jerusalem. The Jebusites worshipped primarily El and Sedek. Their legendary priest and king was Melchizedek ("My King is Sedek"). The leader of the Canaanite coalition against Joshua was Adoni-zedek ("My Lord is Sedek"). Aram had El and Hadad, Canaan had El and Baal and the Jebusites had El and Sedeq.

El defines Israel- L.M. Barré <http://www.angelfire.com/ca2/AncientIsrael/Israel.html>

This identification of El with Yhvh is also seen in the story of Balaam in Num 23. The proper name of the God of Abraham was El.

The word "God" in the English versions of the Old Testament, in 213 instances is the translation of the Hebrew word "El." God is called "El" fifty-six times in the book of Job.

Jacob built an altar to god El: "There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel." (Genesis 33:20) "And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God {El}, the God {Elohim} of your father." (Genesis 46:2-3)

(e.g. Genesis 14:18-24; Psalm 57:2-3a; Psalm 78:35, 41-57; Psalm 46:4; Psalm 50:14-15; Psalm 107:11-12; Deuteronomy 32:7-8; 2 Samuel 22:14; Lamentations 3:35, 38; Daniel 3:26; Daniel 4; Daniel 5:18-21; Mark 5:7 (Luke 8:28) ; Luke 1:32; Luke 1:35; Acts 16:17-18)

Salem

Psalm 76.2 identifies it as Zion, c.f Josephus Ant 7.3.2; War 6..10.1; and all the Targums render Salem as Jerusalem. So also does the Qumran Genesis Apocryphon (1Q 20 XXII). Jerome noted that the Hebrews identified Salem as Jerusalem .

Other possibilities that do not carry much evidence include the following:

- There had been an ancient city Salim (Salem) near Nablus (LXX Gen.33.18; LXX Jer 48.5 Salem= Hebrew 41.5, where Salem was Shiloh; also Jub.30.1; Judith 4.4). This may be the Salim of John 3.23, near where John baptised.
- The Spanish Christian pilgrim Egeria (about 390CE) was shown a large village in the Jordan valley, said to have been the city of Melchizedek.
- The Samaritans had claimed Salem at least since Pseudo-Eupolemos, 2nd century BCE, who says Abraham met Melchizedek near Mount Gerizim.

This is what Josephus the historian of the first century has to say:

"But he who first built it was a potent man among the Canaanites, and is in our own tongue called [Melchisedek], the Righteous King, for such he really was; on which account he was [there] the first priest of God, and first built a temple [there], and called the city Jerusalem, which was formerly called Salem."

- Flavius Josephus, *War of the Jews*, Bk VI, Ch X, Sn 1

In 1925 a German archaeologist managed to buy some Egyptian pottery of the 18th century BC on which appeared some texts written in the Greek language. Among the text was the name Ur Salem, which is generally accepted, though with little proof, to be the name of the city—Jerusalem. The name Maliki Sadik is also mentioned in connection with the city, for he was the priest of Ur Salem. Maliki Sadik is certainly the person of Melchizedek. Malik simply means King. An additional mention of Ur Salem comes from the Tal Ammareneh in Egypt, where Ur Salem was used as a curse against uncooperative kings. Ur is same as city or village which is the same word used in Tamil and other Dravidian languages.

Archaeological studies indicate that the city is very ancient, having been established perhaps more than 2,000 years before it was captured from the Jebusites by King David about 1,000 B.C.

Salem is in Mount Zion which is also known as Mount Moriah. It was here Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac to show his absolute trust in El Elyon in Gen 22.

The Samaritans identified the city of Salem with their sanctuary on Mount Gerizim (see LXX., Gen. xxxiii. 18; comp. Eusebius, "Præparatio Evangelica," ix. s7).

Beth-el lie North of Jerusalem.

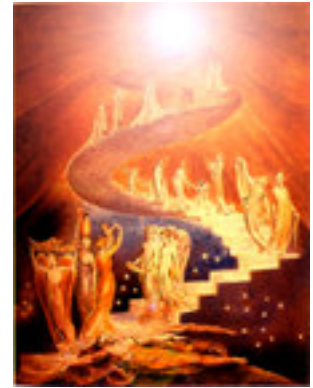
The Book of Genesis relates that Abraham built his first altar in Canaan here and that the name Bethel, given to Jacob's sacred stone, was then transferred to the town itself. At the time of the Judges it was a national shrine. It temporarily harbored the Ark of the Covenant.

Bethel lost its preeminence as a Jewish shrine to Jerusalem; in 1 Kings, Jeroboam's attempt to establish Bethel as a rival religious capital failed.

The Columbia Encyclopedia



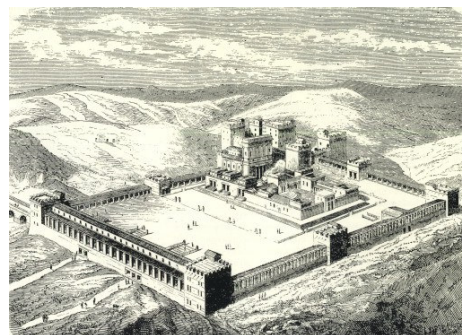
Sacrifice of Isaac took place in Mount Moriah in Jerusalem called it Beth El, the house of El



Jacob's Ladder – Jacob

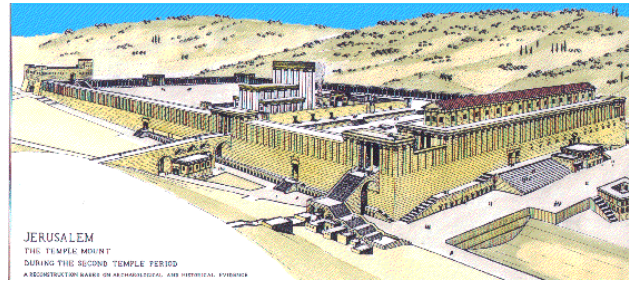
The tradition of "Jacob's Dream" is also identified with Mount Moriah. There he put a linga stone and poured oil over it as an offering to El Elyon. At the time of the arrival of the Israelites in Palestine it was known as Jebus under the control of Jebusites. The word simply means Hill country. Jebusites means Hilly Billys. They were ruled by Adonizedek (Joshua 10:1,23) who probably was one of the descendants or predecessor of Melchizedek. This land was given to Abraham and his descendants by El because the Salemites were rejected by El. (Genesis 15:21; Exodus 3:8,17; 23:23,24; Deuteronomy 20:17; Exodus 33:9; 34:10,11) They were defeated by Joshua, and their king was slain; but they were not entirely driven out of Jebus till the time of David. Even when David took the Hill country, he respected the rights of the people of Jebus and their property rights. Thus the Mount Moriah was owned by Araunah (who was using it as a threshing floor), the city's former Jebusite king from whom David bought it. "So David paid Ornan [Auranah] for the site 600 shekels' worth of gold. And David built there an altar to the Lord and sacrificed burn offerings and offerings of well-being" (1 Chronicles 21:25, 2 Samuel 24:18-25).

See <http://jeru.huji.ac.il>



Solomon's Temple

The first Temple was constructed by King Solomon over a period of about 12 years, with completion around 950 B.C. This Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar about 587 B.C. The first Temple lasted about 360 years.



Herod's Temple

The Temple was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and was in existence at the time of Jesus Christ. It was a continuation of earlier reconstruction work done by Jews who had been allowed to return by the Persians after the Babylonian Captivity. The second Temple was destroyed by the Roman Legions under Titus in 70 A.D. Bible prophecy clearly indicates that one more Temple is going to be constructed in Jerusalem.

Chapter Two

Priest- King



Priest King sculpture found in Mohenjodaro Harappa of a Dravidian civilization of the pre Abrahamic era. The Mohenjo Daro/Harappa culture, located along the banks of the Indus River circa 3000-2500 BCE. Similar Priest-King concepts are found also in Sumeria. At Ur teakwood and mention of Dacca muslin were found on some tablets, both of which were special products of India. It can be safely assumed that these two ancient cultures were in contact with each other and probably shared the faith of the El Elyon – Parameshwara.

“The Priest-King story of Melchizedek rests upon ancient Jerusalemic tradition (as Josephus, "B. J." vi. 10, affirms; comp. Gunkel, "Genesis," 1901, p. 261), "Zedek" being an ancient name of Jerusalem (probably connected with the Phenician Συδνκ = "Zedek" = "Jupiter"; comp. Shab. 156a, b; Gen. R. xliii.; Pesiq. R. 20; see Baudissin, "Studien zur Semitischen Religionsgesch." 1876, i. 14-15). Hence "ir ha-Zedek" (Isa. i. 21, 26), "neweh Zedek" (Jer. xxxi. 23, l. 7), "sha'are Zedek" (Ps. cxviii. 19). The city's first king, accordingly, was known either as "Adoni Zedek" (Josh. x. 1 *et seq.*; comp. Judges i. 5-7, where "Adonizedek" is the correct reading) or as "Malkizedek."” Isidore Singer, Kaufmann Kohler
http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view_friendly.jsp?artid=383&letter=M

According to Midr. Teh. to Ps. xxxvii., Abraham learned the practise of charity from Melchizedek. Philo speaks of him as "the logos, the priest whose inheritance is the true God" ("De Allegoriis Legum," iii. 26).

Zechariah 6:9-14 also portrays this Messianic priest-king relationship without even using the name *Melchizedek*. Here Zechariah is told to crown the current high priest, Joshua, in a highly prophetic act, symbolizing the coming of Jesus who would ultimately fulfill both roles

Psa 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchiz'edek."

Some understand this passage to be Messianic in nature. Some scholars understand this reference to be a polemic inserted into the text in order to legitimize King David's claim that his house had become heir to a dynasty of priest-kings. David seems to have acted as priest before the ark dancing with an ephod (2Sa 6:14) and have sacrificed (2Sa 24:25) The New Year festival of Judah with its the processional, enthronement, royal psalms repeated Ps 110.4 So David was being elevated to priest-king status, a feature of Canaanite religion. Before David, King Saul had been castigated for offering a sacrifice when the Priest Prophet Samuel was late.

Some others assume that , Psalm 110.4 was inserted to legitimize King David's decision to appoint "Zadok" as priest in Jerusalem. This theory presupposes that Zadok was in fact a direct descendant of "Adoni Zedek" (Joshua 10) and "Melchi-Zedek" (Genesis 14).

Psalm 110.4 was certainly used by the Maccabees to legitimize their claim to power. It was also used by "Ebed-Tob," according to an "Armana Tablet" to lay a claim to the attributes of Melchizedek that the Book of Hebrews explains.

Sa 13:9 So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.

1Sa 13:10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and salute him.

1Sa 13:11 Samuel said, "What have you done?"

In contrast we see

1Ch 21:28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jeb'usite, he made his sacrifices there.

The legitimatization is seen in the following sequence of Priest-Kings:

First Melchizedek, as the first king of Jerusalem.

Second, Abraham, first Hebrew priest to offer sacrifices on temple site.

Gen 22:13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Third, David, the first righteous (like Melchizedek) Hebrew king to sit on "Melchizedek's throne" 1000 years later, announces that Jesus will be the first spiritual king to sit on the throne in Jerusalem. So from Melchizedek to David, and from David to Christ is about 1000 years between each! Psa.110:4_ makes the king-priest who is addressed there a virtual successor of Melchizedek, and the kings of Jerusalem might well, as Gunkel suggests, have been considered successors of Melchizedek in the same way that Charlemagne was regarded as the successor of the Caesars, and the latter as successors of the Pharaohs in Egypt.

Fourth, Jesus sits on the throne of David (and Melchizedek) at the ascension. Acts 2:29-36. Then it comes full circle, because Jesus was a king and priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Heb. 7:4-10)

Skinner (Gen, 271, where Josephus, Ant, XVI, vi, 2, and Amos M 6:1 are cited) points out that the Maccabees (The Hasmoneans) were called "high priests of God most high." Hence, some hold that the story of Melchizedek is an invention of Judaism, but Gunkel (Genesis 3, 285 ff.) maintains that he is a traditional, if not a historical, character.

The Maccabees appear in history as the family of a priest, Mattathias, dwelling in Modin, who opposed the Hellenizing tendencies of the Syrian ruler Antiochus IV. Antiochus had taken advantage of factionalism among the Jews and had stripped and desacralized the Temple and begun a religious persecution. Mattathias, after killing an apostate Jew who took part in a Greek sacrifice, killed the royal enforcing officer. With his five sons he fled to the mountains and was joined by many Hasidim (167 B.C.) Thus began a guerrilla war. On Mattathias' death (166 B.C.) the leadership passed to his son Judas Maccabeus, from whose surname the family name is derived. Judas, an excellent military leader, defeated an expedition sent from Syria to destroy him. Having occupied Jerusalem, he reconsecrated the Temple. the feast of Hanukkah celebrates this event (165 B.C.).

Maccabean Era lasted from 166 -129 BC.

(The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia.

See also the Apocryphal Books of Maccabees

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/Maccabees.html>)

Chapter Three

Who is Melchizedek

Heb 5:8 Although Jesus was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered;

Heb 5:9 and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

Heb 5:10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchiz'edek.

Heb 6:19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain,

Heb 6:20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchiz'edek.

Heb 7:1 For this Melchiz'edek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him;

Heb 7:2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

Heb 7:3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever.

Heb 7:4 See how great he is! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of the spoils.

Heb 7:5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, though these also are descended from Abraham.

Heb 7:6 But this man who has not their genealogy received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

Heb 7:7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.

Heb 7:8 Here tithes are received by mortal men; there, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.

Heb 7:9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,

Heb 7:10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchiz'edek met him.

Heb 7:11 Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levit'ical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchiz'edek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?

Heb 7:12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.

Heb 7:13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar.

Heb 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

Heb 7:15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchiz'edek,

Heb 7:16 who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life

Heb 7:17 For it is witnessed of him, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchiz'edek."

Heb 7:18 On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness

Heb 7:19 (for the law made nothing perfect); on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

Heb 7:20 And it was not without an oath.

Heb 7:21 Those who formerly became priests took their office without an oath, but this one was addressed with an oath, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "Thou art a priest for ever."

Heb 7:22 This makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant.

Heb 7:23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office;

Heb 7:24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever.

Heb 7:25 Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Heb 7:26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

Heb 7:27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

Heb 7:28 Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

There is a Hebrew tradition that Melchizedek was Shem or a son of Shem, the son of Noah, others stipulates that Melchizedek was a grandson of Canaan. (Encyclopaedia Judaica, Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, Ltd., Jerusalem, Israel, copyright 1972, Vol. 11, columns 1287-1289.)

Melchizedek as Shem

Midrash Sefer HaYashar(Jasher) 16:11, 12, tells us the story of Abram's meeting with Melchizedek after freeing Lot:

11 And Adonizedek king of Jerusalem, the same was Shem, went out with his men to meet Abram and his people, with bread and wine, and they remained together in the valley of Melech. 12 And Adonizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth from all that he had brought from the spoil of his enemies, for Adonizedek was a priest before God

Book of Jasher is referred in Josh 10:13 and 2 Sam 1:18. The lost of book of the Bible was probably a kind of national sacred song-book. Mentioned twice in the Bible, this ancient historical book, once lost, has survived the ravages of time and was faithfully translated into the English language and published in the year 1840.

In this book the name of the King of Jerusalem is given as Adonizedek instead of Melkizedek. In those days a person had several names.

Melchizedek as Shem can be found in the Targums, Aramaic renderings of the Hebrew Bible. *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 14:18 shows the exegetical development of this identification: "And Melchisedech, king of Jerusalem - he is Shem the Great - brought out bread and wine, for he was the priest who ministered in the high priesthood before the most High God.". The Palestinian Targum tradition has Melchizedek as Shem (Neofiti and Fragments, Ps Jonathan) but T. Onkelos does not.

Shem was 98 years old at the time of the Flood. At 100 years of age he had a son, Arphaxad, and lived after that 500 more years. [Genesis 11:10, 11] Following the genealogy we can see that $2+35+30+34+30+32+30+29+70= 292$ years after the Flood Abraham was born. Abraham lived to be 175 years of age. Abraham died $292+175= 467$ after the Flood. Shem survived Abraham by 33 years. It seems quite reasonable to deduce that Shem, after the Flood, became conscious of his calling as a son of Noah and survivor of the Flood to teach the people all he knew about the religion of the pre-flood patriarchs. In his capacity of survivor he took on the functions of a priest, renamed himself in this new life as 'Melchizedek' and that is why Abram, also of the lineage of Shem, when meeting his ancestor Shem/Melchizedek regarded him as the true Priest of God. [Genesis 14:18,19].

Jerome, recording the Hebrew traditions of his own time, says they believed Melchizedek to have been Shem, and his sons to have been priests before the time of Aaron.

Melchizedek as Shem was also known to St. Ephrem the Syrian (Commentary on Genesis 11.2).

Another important point in identification of Shem and Melchizedek is the fact that the blessing of Shem in Gen 9:26 has distinct parallels with the blessing which Melchizedek gives to Abraham.

The mormons or Latter Day Saints Theology states that Melchizedek received the priesthood from the lineage of the fathers, even till Noah (D&C 84:14).

<http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/melchizedek>

"Rabbi Jochanan ben Nuri says: The Holy One Blessed Be He, took Shem and separated him to be a priest to Himself, that he might serve before him. He also caused his Shechinah to rest with him, and called his name Melchizedek, priest of the Most High and King of Salem, where Abraham came and learned the Law at the school of Shem, where God, Himself, instructed Abraham so that all else he had learned from the lips of man was forgotten. Then came Abraham and prayed to God that His Shechinah might ever rest in the house of Shem which also was promised to him; as it is said, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

<http://www.jfjonline.org/faq/jewsjudaism/melchizedek.htm>

Melchizedek as the son of Canaan

In Ethiopian Book of Adam and Eve, (iii. 13-21), Noah tells his son Shem before his death to take "Melchizedek, the son of Canaan, whom God had chosen from all generations of men, and to stand by the dead body of Adam after it had been brought from the ark to Jerusalem as the center of the earth and fulfil the ministry before God." The angel Michael then took away Melchizedek, when he was fifteen years of age, from his father, and, after having anointed him as priest, brought him to (Jerusalem) the center of the earth, telling his father to share the mystery only with Shem, the son of Noah. The Holy Spirit, speaking out of the ark when the body of Adam was hidden, greeted Melchizedek as "the first-created of God." Shem went, carrying bread and wine, and, assisted by the angel, brought the body of Adam to its destination. Melchizedek offered the bread and wine upon the altar they built near the place where Adam's body was deposited, and then Shem departed, leaving the pure lad in his garment of skins under the sole protection of the angel, no one on earth knowing of his whereabouts until, at last, Abraham met him.

Jewish Encyclopaedia

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=383&letter=M>

Melchizedek as Noah's sister-in-law's son

Others suggest based on the book of Enoch, that Melchizedek was the son of Noah's deceased sister in law. The book of Enoch (of which Jude refers to) says that Noah's sister in law died while pregnant, and that miraculously, after her death, the child, Melchizedek

was delivered. It goes on to describe that this Melchizedek infant was born with sort of a birth mark on his chest that was a priestly seal and instantly spoke and sang praises to God. The story continues that prior to the flood, an angel came and took Melchizedek into heaven so that he might escape the deluge. Melchizedek was then returned to the earth after the flood, to reign as priest, and shall come yet a third time, at the end times.

Behold, the wife of Nir, whose name was Sopanim, being sterile and never having at any time given birth to a child by Nir - Sopanim was in the time of her old age and in the day of her death. She conceived in her womb, but Nir the priest had not slept with her. From the day that that The Lord had appointed him to conduct the liturgy in front of the face of the people. When Sopanim saw her pregnancy, she was ashamed and embarrassed, and she hid herself during all the days until she gave birth. Not one of the people knew about it. When 282 days had been completed, and the day of birth had begun to approach, Nir remembered his wife, he called her to himself in his house, so that he might converse with her. Sopanim came to Nir, her husband; and, behold, she was pregnant, and the day appointed for giving birth was drawing near. Nir saw her and became very ashamed. He said to her, "What is this that you have done, O wife? Why have you disgraced me in front of the face of these people? Now, depart from me and go where you began the disgrace of your womb, so that I might not defile my hand on account of you, and sin in front of The Face of The Lord."

And it came to pass, when Nir had spoken to his wife, Sopanim, that Sopanim fell down at Nir's feet and died. ... The archangel Gabriel appeared to Nir, and said to him, "Do not think that your wife Sopanim has died because of your error, but this child, which is to be born of her is a righteous fruit, and one whom I shall receive into paradise, so that you will not be the father of a gift of God."

When they had gone out toward the grave, a child came out from the dead Sopanim and sat on the bed at her side. Noah and Nir came in to bury Sopanim and they saw the child sitting beside the dead Sopanim, wiping his clothing. Noah and Nir were very terrified with a great fear, because the child was fully developed physically, he spoke with his lips and blessed The Lord.

Noah and Nir looked at him closely, saying, "This is from The Lord, my brother." And behold the badge of priesthood was on his chest, and it was glorious in appearance. Noah said to Nir, "Behold, God is renewing the priesthood from blood related to us, just as He pleases.."

Noah and Nir hurried and washed the child, they dressed him in the garments of the priesthood, and they gave him bread to eat and he ate it. And they called him Melchizedek .
...

The Lord heeded Nir and appeared to him in a night vision. And He said to him, " ... I, in a short while, will send My archangel Gabriel. And he will take the child and put him in the

paradise of Edem. He will not perish along with those who must perish. As I have revealed it, Melchizedek will be My priest to all holy priests, I will sanctify him and I will establish him so that he will be the head of the priests of the future". ... "And behold, Melchizedek will be the head of priests in another generation. I know that great confusion has come and in confusion this generation will come to an end, and everyone will perish, except that Noah, my brother, will be preserved for procreation. From his tribe, there will arise numerous people, and Melchizedek will become the head of priests reigning over a royal people who serve You, O Lord."

It happened when the child had completed 40 days in Nir's tent, The Lord said to the archangel Gabriel, "Go down onto the earth to Nir the priest, and take the child Melchizedek, who is with him. Place him in the paradise of Edem for preservation....' " And Gabriel took the child, Melchizedek on the same night on his wings, and he placed him in the paradise of Edem.

2 Enoch <http://members.truepath.com/cherub7/enoch8.html>

In this story Melchizedek is indeed the type of Jesus before the flood. He was born of a virgin by the holy spirit though that is not explicitly spelled out. Hence he is born without a father. But yet he has a virgin mother. He escaped the flood because he was taken away from earth and kept in the heaven. He was returned to earth to be priest to the post-flood believers.

"2 Enoch, or the Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch, was written late first century C.E. in Egypt by a Jew. It survives only in late Old Slavonic manuscripts. It may have been composed originally in Aramaic or Hebrew, later being translated into Greek, and later still being translated into Old Slavonic. It is an amplification of Gen 5:21-32 (from Enoch to the Flood).

Melchizedek is an Angel or Cosmic Christ

Qmelch scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This scroll contains information saying that Melchizedek is an angelic, heavenly warrior who shall lead an heavenly army in an epic battle between good and evil. The battle sounds remarkably similar to the Christian teaching of the "Battle of Armageddon," and Melchizedek has the role of "Christ."

Many Christians have also believed that Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of "Christ." "Mark the Hermit" of the fifth century, "Theodotus the Banker," and his sect known as the "Melchizedekians" or "Athingani" (whose descendants are the modern day Roma Gypsies) existed in the early centuries. These Melchizedekites "regarded Melchizedek as a great heavenly power and as a son of God, superior to Jesus (Epiphanius, "Hæresis," lv. 1-9; Hippolytus, "Refutatio Hæresium," vii. 36, x. 20; pseudo-Tertullian, 48; Augustinus, "De Hæresibus," 34; see also Herzog-Hauck, "Real-Encyc." s.v.

"Monarchianismus").” Others conclude that Melchizedek was some kind of extra-terrestrial being who has appeared at various moments in earth’s history and is taken up by the gnostics and new agers of today as the “Cosmic Christ,” (referred to by John Chrysostom) or the “Archiereus Logos.” (referred to by Philo) In fact, the Christian Gnostics considered Melchizedek a savior-god higher than Jesus: "Melchizedek was the savior for angels, while Christ was only the savior for men. They regarded Melchizedek as a great heavenly power and as one of the Sons of God, probably even superior to Jesus (Epiphanius," Hæresis," lv. 1-9; Hippolytus, "Refutatio Hæresium," vii. 36, x. 20; pseudo-Tertullian, 48; Augustinus, "De Hæresibus," 34)

Theodotus the banker (*ho trapezites*) added to his master's doctrine the view that Melchisedech was a celestial power, who was the advocate for the angels in heaven, as Jesus Christ was for men upon earth (a view found among later sects). This teaching was of course grounded on Hebrews, vii, 3, and it is refuted at length by St. Epiphanius as Heresy 55, "Melchisedechians", after he has attacked the leather-seller under Heresy 54, "Theodotians". The sect probably died out about the middle of the third century
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10448a.htm> Catholic encyclopaedia

Melchizedek was much more than an angel or heavenly high priest, he was actually a lesser god devoted to the service of his one and only God. It was Melchizedek who commanded Michael and Gabriel in the wars of the heaven leading to the casting out of Satan. It was Melchizedek who ordained Abraham, King David, and even Jesus Christ, into the high priesthood of God. There is no one higher than Melchizedek, the Archangel, the personal high priest of the most high God!

<http://www.highpriests.org/otherWritings.htm>

New Agers put greater stress on this interpretation of Jesus.

Justin Martyr (Trypho 33, also 19 and 113) argued that Melchizedek was the uncircumcised high priest who blessed the circumcised Abraham; Tertullian (Against the Jews 2) had similar views. These were examples of Christian polemic against the Jews. Theophilus of Antioch (about 190CE) who argued that Melchizedek was the first priest of priests, the first of the universal priesthood (Autolytus 2.31). Clement of Alexandria has a non-polemical view of Melchizedek's priesthood, (Miscellanies 2.25), which is also found in the consecration prayers for a bishop in the Apostolic Constitution. These are still used in the Coptic Church, citing Melchizedek as one among many Old Testament priests.

Chapter Four

Characteristics of Melchizedek

As we read the book of Hebrews we have a large number of superlative adjectives and characteristic for Melchizedek which needs to be addressed to understand the person of Melchizedek

1. King of Salem
2. Priest of the Most High God
3. King of Righteousness
4. King of Peace
5. Without father, without mother
6. Without genealogy
7. Without beginning of days
8. Without end of life
9. Made like unto the Son of man
10. Abide as a Priest continually
11. Greater than Abraham
12. He lives
13. The Levitical priesthood paid tithes to Melchizedek , indirectly in the loins of Abraham
14. After the power of an endless life
15. Abide as a Priest Forever

“without father, without mother, without genealogy” (Heb.7:3).

What do we make of this statement in Heb 7?

- Origen, an ancient writer (A.D. 185-253) imagined that Melchizedek was an angel.
- Hierakas, toward the end of the 3rd century A.D., thought that he was a temporary incarnation of the Holy Spirit.
- Some even have suggested that he was the pre-incarnate Logos (Christ, as depicted in John 1:1,14)—a concept contradicted by Hebrews 7:3, which notes that the king was merely “like unto” the Son of God and Heb 7:6 specifies Melchizedek as “this man who has not their genealogy”
- Archaeology gives another insight into this statement viz. Melchizedek received his kingship or his priesthood by virtue of his heritage. He was ordained by God Himself. Genesis 14:18 in fact stipulates this.

Archaeology has shed light on the enigmatic expression “without father, without mother, etc.” A.H. Sayce, who served as professor of Assyriology at Oxford, called attention to an

inscription from the famous Tell el-Amarna tablets (discovered in 1887 in Egypt). These tablets describe the conditions of Syria and Palestine about 1400-1360 B.C.

Several of the Tell el-Amarna tablets are letters written to the Pharaoh by Ebed-tob...the king of Uru-Salim [Jerusalem], who begs for help against his enemies. He tells the Pharaoh that he was not like the other Egyptian governors in Palestine, nor had he received a crown by inheritance from his father or mother; it had been conferred on him by “the Mighty King...”

A.H. Sayce, who served as Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, called attention to an inscription from the famous Tell el-Amarna tablets (discovered in 1887 in Egypt). These tablets describe the conditions of Syria and Palestine about 1400-1360 B.C.

“Several of the Tell el-Amarna tablets are letters written to the Pharaoh by Ebed-tob . . . the king of Uru-Salim [Jerusalem], who begs for help against his enemies. He tells the Pharaoh that he was not like the other Egyptian governors in Palestine, nor had he received his crown by inheritance from his father or mother; it had been conferred on him by ‘the Mighty King’” (p. 335).

So, observing the similarity of language, we conclude that Melchizedek’s kingship-priesthood had not been genealogically derived. He had received his commission directly from God Himself – indeed as the Scriptures affirm: he was an appointment “of God Most High” (Gen. 14:18).

If Melchizedek literally had no father or mother, then we will have various problems to face. The only person he could have been was God Himself; He is the only person with no beginning (I Tim.6:16; Ps.90:2). But this is vetoed practically by Heb.7:4: "Consider how great this man was" indicating that Melchizedek was a man. He was seen by men which implies that he has come in flesh or in human form. He offered sacrifices to God. He was a King of a city and was a priest to a people. He was an incarnation in human form. He could have been a human incarnation of Jesus himself. If he is called a man, then he must have had literal parents. Like Jesus he could have had a mother in the incarnation even if he did not have a father. In that case why did he leave the earth without the great sacrifice on the cross for the whole mankind? What did he do with his human body? If he simply ascended into heaven and still remain as a priest for ever, then we have two High Priests in heaven – Jesus and Melchizedek. Probably Melchizedek was the incarnation of Holy Spirit. Then he was not “like the Son of God”. Taking this characteristics in the literal sense will only put us deeper into lot of contradictions. So we need to look into other possibilities of explanations.

His being "without father, without mother, without descent" must therefore refer to the fact that his pedigree and parents are not recorded. This is a style of writing which is not common to us in this century but was easily understood by the people of the first century.

Queen Esther's parents are not recorded, and so her background is described in a similar way. Mordecai "brought up...Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother...whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter" (Esther 2:7).

Does this mean Esther did not have a father or mother? The sentence goes on to explain the meaning.

The expression was used, not to indicate eternity, but to express the idea that an individual did not have a recorded genealogy, or to indicate an obscure genealogy. Adam Clarke gives such examples from actual historical documents of the day. Here are two such documents:

Here are two other contemporary documents which give the same sense:

Senecca, in his 108th epistle, speaking of some of the Roman kings, says: "Of the mother of Servius Tullus there are doubts; and Ancus Marcus is said to have no father."

Titus Livius, speaking of Servius, says he was born of a slave, named Cornicularia,..., of no father.

This type of wording was common in the days of the writing of the book of Hebrews and did not indicate the idea of eternity, but rather lack of knowledge, or obscurity about one's genealogy. The phrase "without descent" is translated from the Greek word *agenealogetos*. This word does not mean the absence of ancestors, but the absence of a traced genealogy. According to Adam Clarke, the word means "a generation, a descent, a pedigree, not absolutely, but rehearsed, described, recorded." The base of *agenealogetos* is *genealogetos*. The "a" before the word changes the word into its negative, or opposite meaning, portraying the idea of "without." "*Genealogetos* is he whose stock is entered on record. And so, on the contrary, *agenealogetos* is not he who has no descent, no genealogy, but he whose descent and pedigree is nowhere entered, recorded, reckoned up."

without "beginning of days" and "end of life"

Again the a literal interpretation will simply lead to similar consternations. What is this referring to? Melchizedek or to the order of Melchizedekian Priesthood? Melchizedek's administration was without "beginning of days" and "end of life" (7:3b). Again, this does not refer to Melchizedek, but to his Priesthood. The meaning is that his priesthood was not for a fixed term (as in the case of the Levitical priests). Under the Old Testament regime, priests began their service at the age of 30, and the Levites served from age 30 to 50 (cf. Num. 4:3ff; 8:24-25). Many Scriptures in the Old Testament, such as Nehemiah 7:63-64, Leviticus 21:17, and Ezekiel 44:22 declare that Jewish priests had to establish their genealogy in order to qualify for the ministry of the priesthood. Unlike these Old Testament priests, Melchizedek neither became a priest by the benefit of heredity nor handed the office to a future relative.

To the Jews, a traceable genealogy was of utmost importance, especially for the priesthood. If one could not prove his lineage, he was barred from being a priest (Nehemiah 7:64). The

Jews were reasoning: 'You Christians tell us that this Jesus can now be our high priest, offering our prayers and perform mediation to God. But a priest has to have a known genealogy, proving he is from the tribe of Levi . But this Jesus was from the tribe of Judah (Heb.7:14).' To which Paul is replying: 'But remember Melchizedek. He was a High Priest of the God Most High. He did not have any genealogy; nor was he a Levite to claim Aaronic Priesthood. The priesthood of Jesus is after the pattern of Melchizedek (Heb.5:6 cp. Ps.110:4). Even Abraham was inferior to Melchizedek.

You Are A Priest Forever

(1) The word, “Forever” in this verse carries with it both reaching into the “long ago” as well as the “yet to come.” It is a perpetual priesthood, without beginning and without ending. This is a significant aspect of this verse in that it indicates that there exists a priesthood of the Lord that predates the Levitical, and continues concurrent with the Levitical order of priest, while remaining distinct from it. .

(2) The eternal nature, here refers, grammatically, to the person “You,” (the antecedent of which is not defined in this passage) but also by association must either refer to the priesthood to which the “You” is linked, or the man called Melchizedek, himself. For Melchizedek to be a “priest forever” necessitates his own eternal nature. God alone is truly eternal, either Melchizedek was God Himself. So people have been proposing that Melchizedek was the incarnation of either the second or the third person in the trinity. Otherwise we must understand the “eternal nature” to refer to the “religious order” and not Melchizedek as a person.

Chapter Five

Melchizedek, Christ, Eternal Priesthood

There are two groups: Those who say No and those who say yes. What are the logic in both?

Jesus was not Melchizedek

That Melchizedek was *not the same person* as Jesus is evident in that he is said to be "like unto" the Son of God (Heb. 7:3c). The participle *aphomoioo* denotes a comparison (e.g., a "copy" or "facsimile" - J.H. Thayer, **Greek-English Lexicon**, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1958, pp. 89-90). The term becomes irrelevant if the two persons were the same in identity.

A distinction between Christ and Melchizedek is vividly seen in Psalm 110, where Jehovah addresses David's "Lord" (Jesus) in the second person, while the reference to Melchizedek is in the third person (v. 4). [Note: See Matthew 22:42-44 for Jesus' application of this psalm to himself.]

If we accept this argument we need to justify the statements about "without father and mother without descent" and without "beginning and end" as we have indicated earlier.

Holy Spirit was Melchizedek

1. King of Salem
2. Priest of the Most High God
3. King of Righteousness
4. King of Peace
5. Without father, without mother
6. Without genealogy
7. Without beginning of days
8. Without end of life
9. Made like unto the Son of man
10. Abide as a Priest continually
11. Greater than Abraham
12. He lives
13. The Levitical priesthood paid tithes to Melchizedek, indirectly in the loins of Abraham
14. After the power of an endless life

If all these characteristics are to be fulfilled it can only be only be one of the trinity. Melchizedek was Priest of the Most High God [God the Father], therefore Melchizedek was not God the Father. In a sense the second person is called Son and therefore has a father and mother – the Father and Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is referred to in the Bible as female gender in Aramaic.

He could be the Holy Spirit. Melchizedek was the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, appearing in human form to Abraham in that dispensation, just as Jesus, the Second Person of the Godhead, also appeared in human form, or in the form of an Angel, to Abraham and to the people of the Old Testament dispensation as well. However Melchizedek was not just a messenger to Abraham but was also a resident King of Salem. If we assume that the Holy Spirit incarnated in Melkizedek all conditions are met though it is difficult to assume that Holy Spirit incarnate. The usual concept is that Holy Spirit indwells in the Temple of God the human body. That is what Holy Spirit does in the New Testament Dispensation. This will therefore lead to the concept of Holy Spirit taking control of a saintly willing person a Prophet and a Priest and dwell among a people whom he instructs and leads in worship. The Holy Ghost is a Person really distinct as such from the Father and the Son; He/She is God and consubstantial with the Father and the Son. He is the Spirit of God, and at the same time the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9); because He is in God, He knows the deepest mysteries of God (I Corinthians 2:10-11), and He possesses all knowledge. "The Spirit helps us in our weakness," St. Paul says, "for we do not know how to pray as we ought..." (Romans 8, 26) There is also the strong relation between worship and the Holy Spirit. Without the action of the Spirit connecting us with Christ, who absorbs and perfects our worship and presents it to God on our behalf, all of our prayer and praise and worship would be unworthy and sinful. Our worship is made holy by Christ in the Spirit. Thus, worship must be understood as the appropriate relationship between creature and Creator, a relationship directed towards the Father through the Son, who worships perfectly, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit in the true High Priest.

Jesus was Melchizedek

The other alterantive is : Melchizedek is Jesus. Who else can like unto a Son ? Although angels are “without father, without mother” - and “without descent or genealogy” - yet they cannot be said to be “without beginning of days”. He is a divine appearance and a prophetic foreshadowing of the Christ. Melkizedek is then the pre-existent Christ, before incarnation. Because Melchizedek is the Son of God, he is "a priest perpetually." Christ's priesthood is a continuation of, the priesthood of Melchizedek. We are not faced with two priests here, but only one. Christ's priesthood is well attested.

There are indications that Jesus met Abraham. "Before Abraham was, I Am" (John 8:58). Before His birth, however, He was not the Son of God. He looked like the Son of God would later look, but He was Melchizedek, who had been the King of

Righteousness, became the Son of God and the fulfillment of the scepter promise of Genesis 49:10.

Every priest taken from among men is ordained to serve on behalf of men in things pertaining to God so that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. No one takes this honor to himself, he must be called of God, as Aaron was (Hebrews 5:1, 4). So also, Christ did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest, but He who said to Him, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You" said also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:5).

The argument against it is this. If so was Melchizedek a man? How do we define man? Hebrews 7:15,16 reads, "And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such, not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life." Now, because it is according to the power of an indestructible life, it is witnessed of Him that He is a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek (Hb. 7:17). Thus Melchizedek entered into the history as a man (in flesh or out of flesh) and ruled in Salem and disappeared. Again, the priesthood of Christ is the extension, and the New Testament realization, of the priesthood of Melchizedek; that is the only way that we may understand Christ's priesthood as being "according to the order of Melchizedek."

If Christ and Melchizedek are one and the same, we are faced with the implications that Christ appeared to Abram in Genesis 14; and he was the King of Jerusalem where he had followers and a Christian Church existed even in the day of Abram, although not referred to in our Scriptures. This preincarnate Jesus actually used bread and wine as offering even before the crucifixion. Was there salvation without cross? Did he enter the holy of holies without blood?

If Melchizedek was indeed not Christ and How can he be an Eternal Priest:

Then either there exist two eternal priests, Christ and Melchizedek. We have two mediators and there are two ways of approach to God. One without blood and the other with blood. The whole atonement argument of the New Testament will be then void. Hence the only possible explanation is that the eternal order refers to the priesthood office and not to the person. There exists an order by which Jesus the first born of them automatically become a priest. What is this order?

The Christian Gnostics considered Melchizedek a savior-god higher than Jesus: "Melchizedek was the savior for angels, while Christ was only the savior for men."

But there is a solution to this problem in terms of the Sonship

What is this eternal order of Melchizedek?

Exo 19:5 Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine,

Exo 19:6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

1Pe 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The existence of a priest necessitates the existence of a religion or religious order. Priesthood has as a central duty the offering of gifts and sacrifices for sin. This is a piece of information that must lead us to begin considering that Melchizedek had a "religion" and belonged to a religious "order" prior even to Abram. This religion evidently worshipped and had the revelation of Yhvh. This will be satisfied with equating Shem with Melchizedek as we discussed earlier.

The Bible says that every priest is appointed on behalf of men to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. (Heb.5.1) Under the eternal priesthood of Christ, there has only been one true sacrifice for sins, and that was the sacrifice of Christ, Himself, on behalf of mankind throughout all ages. There is no other way to the Father. There is no other sacrifice for sins. If there were, Christ died in vain. Somehow, then, this must have been part of the religious order of Christ even in times prior to His actual death and resurrection. Since this has not happened Melchizedekian religion looked forward to this in a way and was far superior to the Hebrew revealed religion, worship and rituals. We know that this ritual included the communion using bread and wine. We do not know whether it involved animal sacrifice.

It seems that the "religion," prior to the writing of the Torah, was more oriented with an encounter with the L-rd, and an ongoing relationship with Him, than it became to be understood under the Torah.

In Eden, for instance, the L-rd walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening. The L-rd spoke directly with Cain regarding his brother Abel. Noah found grace in the eyes of the L-rd. Enoch walked with the L-rd, and the L-rd took him. The L-rd spoke with Moses, face to face, as it were. The L-rd spoke with Joshua, and each of the prophets in rather spectacular ways, by common human experience. Indeed, even Jeremiah wrote of the covenant being characterized by, among other things, a categorical "knowing" of the L-rd - that all would "know" Him, from the least to the greatest. This kind of "knowing" does not seem to be found as part of the covenant, nor prescribed in the commandments. I suggest for your consideration, that THIS is none else but the essence of the "Melchizedekian Order." It is this "order" that describes the "religion" of the most ancient of the people of faith in the

Scriptures - those who pre-date the covenant with Abram. It is also under this “order” that the L-rd may have operated even after He confirmed the covenant with Abram. Consider, for instance, that the L-rd spoke to Cyrus regarding the rebuilding of the Temple. This is perhaps one of the most demonstrative examples in the Scriptures, for this incident shows not only that the L-rd operated outside of the parameters spelled out in the Torah, yet for the purpose of confirming or establishing the pre-eminence of the Covenant relationship between the L-rd and Israel.

The Magi, who were strangers from distant places, also had G-d encounters.

The essence of the Order of Melchizedek is none other than the means to positive encounters with G-d. This essence is likewise how the Christian New Testament describes the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 7.19) It may also be that the L-rd, Himself has appeared to other people throughout history in events that have not been recorded in the Christian Canon.

The Order Rev. Dr. James D. Regehr, Ph.D.

The Order of Melchizedek becomes, therefore, synonymous with “sonship” under God. Sonship is offered to man as well.

John 1.12 says that “as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become sons of God, even to those who believe on His name.”

Salvation is described in terms of being “adopted as sons through Christ,” (Ephesians 1.5). Once adopted as sons, believers are described as a “royal priesthood,” (1 Peter 2.9). Therefore, in the same way that Christ was made a priest through Sonship, so also is mankind made priests through adoption into sonship through Christ.

The writer of Hebrews describes Christ as having been perfected in conformity with the Order of Melchizedek. The perfection of Christ is described as part of the Order of Melchizedek. This perfection is described in 1 John 3.2 where it says “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.” Thus the writer of Hebrews describes Christ as author of eternal salvation in conformity with the Order of Melchizedek.

Even in the original Israelic thought all first born of every family was considered a priest. They were in fact redeemed against the levites.

Num 3:12 "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every **first-born** that opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine,

Num 3:13 for all the **first-born** are mine; on the day that I slew all the **first-born** in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the **first-born** in Israel, both of man and of beast; they shall be mine: I am the LORD."

Num 3:41 And you shall take the Levites for me--I am the LORD--instead of all the first-born among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the people of Israel."

Thus the system of priesthood based on lineage and heritage came as a result of the failure of Israel to give the first born as priests and to a much earlier understanding where everyone was supposed to be part of the Kingdom of God in communion with God. When that failed came the new levitical order. This priesthood continued only as long as the old order is brought in.

Chapter Six

Pre-Israelic Revelations

Discarding the possibility of Shem as Melchizedek and Melchizedek as an earlier appearance of Jesus who stayed with his People as their King and Priest we have another historical possibility which will tally with the concept of indwelling of Holy Spirit and Sonship. The very existence of Melchizedec before Abraham brings up an interesting situation.

Melchizedek was the King of Jerusalem and also the High Priest to 'El Elyon' which means "Most High God" which indeed was a god of the Hittites and Canaanites of the period of Abraham. This Most High God is evidently identified with Yhvh. The recognition that Parameshwara was indeed the Most High God is significant. The fact that Melchizedek was the King of Jerusalem, and also the High Priest of Most High God, it is evident that the worship of God did exist before the revelation of God through Abraham and to the Israel. This pre-Abrahamic revelation of God through people who were non-Abrahamic is seen elsewhere in the Holy Scriptures.

Amos 9:7 reads: "Are you not like the Sudanese to me, O people of Israel?', says the Lord. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?"

The important point here to note is the reversal of comparison. Lord is not saying 'O people of Sudan, are you not to me like the People of Israel?'. Instead God is speaking to Israel and saying they are to him like the people of the Sudan Egypt and Philistines, indicating that Sudanese, Egyptians and Phillistines were the people of God before Israel was chosen. It also indicates that the Phillistines and the Syrians were brought to the promised land from somewhere else, just as Israel was brought out from Egypt and given the land. This area is the fertile crescent where we see all these three nations. The Philistines were called out of Camphtor and Syrians were called out of Kir by God and brought to the land of Canaan. They were there when Abraham arrived there. Is it any wonder that there were a called out people and a Priest of the Most High God filled with the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem?

The Bible clearly states that God chose people for three specific purposes: First they are to be a kingdom of Priests to the nations so that they may declare to the rest of the world the greatness of God.

'If you will obey my voice and keep my Covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' . Ex.19:5,6

Notice in this promise, everyone in the nation was supposed to be a priest and a King. But this was conditional – that they obey God's voice and keep his Covenant.

Secondly they were to guard the word of God.

Rom 3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?

Rom 3:2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God.

Rom 3:3 What if some were unfaithful

This of course is the major part of the Priesthood. Without the Oracles, there would be no declaration of redemption.

Thirdly they were to bring forth the Word of God in Flesh, i.e. they were to produce Jesus. Israel was rejected by God in carrying on as a special people as they failed to act as missionaries and they failed to accept their mesias. Is it not then reasonable to assume that God might have called other people and must have rejected them for some reason or other because of their failure. If so Amos' list gives these nations which includes Sudan followed by Philistines and Syrians.

We do have evidence to show that Philistines were God's chosen people. Philistines, sons of Egypt, son of Ham, son of Noah were called out of Caphtor (See 1Chr.1:12, Deu.2:23, Jar. 47:4, Amo.9:7 , Gen.10:14) a wreath shaped island in Africa.

Among the Philistines we see Goliath and four of his brothers who are the children of Anak, who occupied Canaan for it was given to them. God brought them out of Caphtor and gave them Canaan, the promised land if we accept Amos. They gave the name Palestine to that place as is known even today. Bible however gives the god of Philistines as Dagon the fish-god while they were a mountain people at that time. How did this come about? Phillistine tribal memory went on to remember the great leading of God in bringing them over the ocean. Did God dry up the ocean for them? Or did he provide fishes to carry them across? With a mighty hand God led them into the promised land. Just as Israel was brought out of Egypt through the Red Sea by making a way through the waters. Israel's God is a mountain God, Phillistines' God was a sea God even though they were a mountain people when we meet them in Canaan. The Fish God was a tribal memory celebrating their migration over the sea to Canaan. Some people think that the scales of the Fish in their god is the structure of corn and they are to be interpreted as a corn god. But the fish tail is still there. Evidently the sea people became the agricultural people in Canaan. Palestine.



Dagon - the god of the Philistin



Mitre

Dagon's temples were in Philistine for about 2000 years, although Baal took over in most parts of the Middle East. Dagon is one of the really old gods. The Ras Shamra texts describe Dagon as coequal with El, who is the most ancient and senior of all the Semitic gods. Dagon's temple at Ashdod existed right up until the time of the Hasmoneans. Dagon was portrayed half man and half fish. After entering the Canaan Dagon became the god of agriculture and fertility. Fish symbolism of Dagon is still with us in the mitre of Popes and Metropolitans.

Note also that Phillistines, sons of Anak, were children of the sons of God as mentioned in Gen.6 and referred to in Num.13:33. God called these Hamites out of Caphtor in Africa and brought them and gave them the promised land and they ruled from the capital of Jerusalem'. Thus Abraham meets with the King of Jerusalem, Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18,19) who was the ultimate product of the Phillistine culture. He was the priest of the Most High God. He is described in Heb.7 as one 'resembling the Son of God', i.e. resembling Jesus. Each culture could produce what it can. In the meeting of Melchizedek with Abraham, Melchizedek blessed Abraham and handed over the election to him. Then on we see the decline of the Philistines, a falling away from the understanding of the Most High God. We don't know when Phillistines lost control of Jerusalem. But soon after Abraham the control of Jerusalem went to Jebusites. At the time of conquest of Canaan the city was also called Jebus. Abimelech, was not the King of Salem but he was the King of Gerar another Philistine Kingdom probably. This King of Philistines certainly showed a deep understanding of God. He even had visions of God and was very sensitive to God's leadings. (see Gen.20,21,26). The prophet of God still prevailed in the land of the Philistines and we meet a famous Balam (Num. 22-23). Otherwise we will find it very difficult to explain the presence of Balam. The God who came to Balaam was none other than Elohim Himself. As the Israelites entered Palestine the King of Jerusalem was Adoni-zedek (Jos. 10). Evidently he was a predecessor of Melchi-zedek. But even though his name includes Adoni, he does not know Adoni. His name is above that of Melkizedek which means King of Justice, while Adonizedec means God of Justice. But he showed no real understanding of Adoni at all. The city of Jerusalem was lost to the Philistines and they were in the hands of Jebusites, the hilly billys of that time. These probably were a mixed nation out of all those who were in that territory. (Adonizedek was like Herod in Judah.) From them David wrenched out Jerusalem.

Thus evidently God called Philistines. There existed a thriving Community of God with a Priest-King one like the son of God in Jerusalem. Melikzedek was indeed a great prophet

filled with the Holy Spirit and the exquisite flower of that called out nation. For some reason, which we can only conjecture, God rejected the nation.

God then must have called other people before them as Amos claims. The first call must have been Sudan, but they were able to produce only a Loped, whom they rejected and God rejected the nation. What was their corruption? We can only guess. Was it the fall into ancestral worship?

Historical evidence indicates that the Southern Sudanese tribes were once occupying the Northern provinces and were pushed back. Probably God led them across Nile into the Southern provinces, which flows with 'milk and honey', and is an agricultural land similar in all respects to Palestine. Mawut says, 'The Dinka have experience similar to the Jewish crossing of the Red Sea. Stories connected with their migration from the east of the Nile to the west mention such events In a story of Western Dinka migration from the eastern bank to western bank of the Bahr el Jebel to Bahr El . Ghazal, a leader of a pursued people , Ajing, prayed to God at Lake Shambe that the water should part to make way for his people to cross. God heard his prayers and made the water part, after which the Dinkas crossed through a dry river bed to the west.' (see Lienhardt)

Gen 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. If you look at the map we can see that this area includes South Sudan.



Appendix I

Some References

Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary says the following about Melchizedek:

A king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6-11; 6:20-7:28). Melchizedek's appearance and disappearance in the Book of Genesis are 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 and religious kinship. 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 (Gen. 14:18-20).

Abraham presented Melchizedek with a tithe (a tenth) of all the booty he had gathered. By this act Abraham indicated that he recognized Melchizedek as a fellow-worshiper of the one true God as well as a priest who ranked higher spiritually than himself. Melchizedek's existence shows that there were people other than Abraham and his family who served the true God.

In Psalm 110, a messianic psalm written by David (Matt. 22:43), Melchizedek is seen 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 (Heb. 7:1-10; Melchisedec, KJV). Attempts have been made to identify Melchizedek as . . . an angel, the Holy Spirit, Christ, and others. All are the products of speculation, not historical fact; and **it is impossible to reconcile them with the theological argument of Hebrews**. Melchizedek was a real, historical king-priest who served as a type for the greater King-Priest who was to come, Jesus Christ (p. 819).

The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary gives this interpretation of the seventh chapter of Hebrews:

Within the interpretation of Ps. 110 that occupies much of the epistle to the Hebrews, Heb. 7 builds on Gen. 14:18-20. Abraham's acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Melchizedek's priesthood becomes an argument for the priority of that priesthood over the "descendants of Levi" (vv. 4-10). The messianic ruler of Ps. 110 is, therefore, a priest of a line prior to the levitical priesthood ("after the order of Melchizedek"; Heb. 7:11-19; KJV "Melchisedec"; cf. 5:6, 10; 6:20). That the narrative of the king-priest Melchizedek is introduced so abruptly into

Genesis becomes an argument for Melchizedek's being "without father or mother or genealogy," i.e., beginning or end (7:3), and so not only a predecessor but also a type of Christ as "a priest for ever" (cf. Ps. 110:4). The legitimacy of the levitical priesthood depends on its descent from Levi; as it has a beginning, so it has an end in the understanding of the author of Hebrews (p. 707).

The caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found yielded a series of thirteen fragments on Melchizedek. From these, it appears the belief that Melchizedek was the Messiah was a strongly held conviction among the Qumran community, as well as among some other Jewish and Gnostic sects in the first century A.D.

Some branches of the Church of God have also held this view. They have used the depiction of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 not only to connect him to Christ but also as support for the co-eternality of Christ with God the Father in the Binitarian model of the Godhead.

In Hebrews 6:20 we find the premise of chapter 7 established, which is that Jesus Christ is now our High Priest in heaven. As such, he is of the order of Melchizedek, which is contrasted with the Levitical priesthood.

HEBREWS 6:20 Where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever **according to** [*kata*] the order of Melchizedek. (*NKJV*)

The *New Analytical Greek Lexicon* says that *kata* means "after the fashion or likeness of."

HEBREWS 7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 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," ³ without father, without mother, **without genealogy** [*agenealogetos*]¹, having neither beginning of days nor end of life², but **made like** [*aphomoiomenos*] the Son of God, remains a priest continually³. (*NKJV*)

The belief that Melchizedek was Christ rests on three erroneous assumptions about Hebrews 7:3, shown by the superscripted numbers in the passage above.

The first is the argument that since Melchizedek is said to be without father, mother, and genealogy, he has to be eternal and therefore the Son of God. However, many have failed to see that the author does not use the terms "without father" (*apatoor*), "without mother" (*ametoor*), and "without genealogy" (*agenealogetos*) literally in this passage.

The concept presented by the author is not that Melchizedek lacked an actual father, mother, or family tree, but that there is no record of his parents and lineage. The Mosaic law required that all priests be descendants of the tribe of Levi. Those who were not Levites could not be priests under the law. Melchizedek is introduced in Genesis 14:18-20 as priest of the Most

High God, but no details are given about him. Under the law, he was not qualified to be a priest.

Nehemiah 7:61-64 shows that priests had to be able to trace their lineage when the priesthood was reestablished after the Babylonian captivity. Those who were unable to do so were disqualified from the priesthood.

NEHEMIAH 7:61 And these were the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not identify their father's house nor their lineage, whether they were of Israel: 62 the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two; 63 and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. 64 These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore **they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled.** (NKJV)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) comments: "The argument of He. 7 is similar to the rabbinic argument from silence, which assumed that nothing exists unless Scripture mentions it. Since Genesis says nothing of Melchizedek's parents, genealogy, birth, or death, he serves as a type representing the eternal Son of God (v. 3)" ("Melchizedek," vol. 3, p. 313).

In rabbinical logic and reasoning, statements could be made which were "arguments from silence." If the Bible didn't specifically say something about a person, place, or incident, various conclusions could be drawn for the sake of the claim or discussion being presented. The author of Hebrews (probably Paul) was obviously familiar with the law, the Temple service, and forms of rabbinical discourse. He uses the rabbinical method of argument from silence in verse 3.

Harper's Bible Commentary says of this passage:

Formally, the chapter [*Hebrews 7*] constitutes an exegetical discussion of Ps. 110:4 based upon the only other OT text that mentions Melchizedek, Gen. 14:17-20. This exegesis, emphasizing the heavenly character of Christ's priesthood, may have been inspired by the abundant contemporary speculation on Melchizedek as a heavenly figure, examples of which are found in the Alexandrian Jewish writer Philo, at Qumran, and in Gnostic sources. Whatever the inspiration, Hebrews is quite restrained in its comments on Melchizedek, utilizing only what is necessary to make the Christological point (p. 1265).

Harper's goes on to say that "from the pregnant silence of Scripture is deduced Melchizedek's status as 'fatherless, motherless, without genealogy' (v. 3)" (p. 1265). Thus, Melchizedek could be said to be "without father, without mother, and without genealogy"

because the Scriptures didn't identify his lineage. While this argument might seem unconvincing to the modern mind, it would have been understandable and reasonable to a first century Jew.

The second mistaken assumption is that Melchizedek had no beginning or end, and therefore must be the immortal Son of God. The term "beginning of days and end of life" refers to the lack of information in the Scriptures regarding his origin or demise. The *Abingdon Bible Commentary* says that in Hebrews 7:3, the author "makes a very remarkable use of the argument from silence. Nothing is said in Genesis about the parentage of Melchizedek. We are not told anything about his father or his mother. There is no reference to the beginning of his life or to its end - to his birth or to his death . . . In view of the writer the silences of Scripture are as significant as its statements . . ." (p. 1310).

About Hebrews 7:3, *Halley's Bible Handbook* says:

What is the meaning of 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life'? Not that it was actually so, but that it appeared so in the Old Testament Records. Levitical Priests were Priests Because of their Genealogy. But Melchizedek, Without Genealogy, was the Recognized Priest of the Human Race at that time. Hebrew tradition is that Shem, who was still alive in the days of Abraham, and, as far is as known, Oldest Living Man at the time, was Melchizedek. A mysterious, solitary picture and type, in the dim past, of the Coming Eternal Priest-King (p. 652).

The third erroneous assumption is that Melchizedek continues as a priest to this day. One might conclude from the statement "Melchizedek remains a priest continually" that he is still alive and holding the office of priest. Again, this is not the point the author of Hebrews is trying to make. In effect, he is using the argument from silence to say that "since the Bible is silent about the death of Melchizedek, we can figuratively contend that he is alive and remains in the office of priest." In this way he is an appropriate type of the priesthood of the Jesus Christ.

Appendix II

Word Study

agenealogetos.

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words says this word "denotes 'without recorded pedigree' . . ." *Vine's* goes on to say that "the narrative in Gen. 14 is so framed in facts and omissions as to foreshadow the person of Christ" (NT, p. 262).

The abridged *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)* says *agenealogetos* "occurs only in Heb. 7:3, where Melchizedek is said to be 'without genealogy.' Unlike the Aaronic priests, he has no traceable descent" (p. 114).

Word Meanings in the New Testament states that this word "is compounded of alpha-negative and the verb *genealogēō* (found in NT only in v. 6), 'to trace ancestry.' So it clearly means 'without genealogy' (NASB, NIV) that is, without a recorded pedigree. We should not assume, as some have wrongly done, that Melchizedek was without human ancestry" (p. 424).

The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Conybeare and Howson write that this word means "without table of descent." They go on to explain, "The priesthood of Melchisedec was not, like the Levitical priesthood, dependent on his descent, through his parents, from a particular family, but was a personal office" (p. 800).

aphomoiomenos.

TDNT says that "this verb [the root *aphomoióō*] means 'to copy,' rarely 'to compare,' and in the passive 'to be or become like' or 'make oneself out to be like'" (p. 686).

ISBE states: "Some have thought that Melchizedek was a Christophany rather than a historical character and thus understood vv. 2b-3 literally rather than typologically. A major objection to such an interpretation is the statement that Melchizedek resembled (Gk. *aphomoiomenos*) the Son of God (v. 3). The verb *aphomoiōō* [from which *aphomoiomenos* is derived] always assumes two distinct and separate identities, one which is a copy of the other. Thus Melchizedek and the Son of God are represented as two separate persons, the first of which resembled the second" ("Melchizedek," vol. 3, p. 313).

genealogoumenos

The use of *genealogoumenos* in verse 6 shows that Melchizedek has lineage, but it is not through Levi.

Vine's says of this word: "'to reckon or trace a genealogy' (from *genea*, 'a race,' and *legō*, 'to choose, pick out'), is used, in the passive voice, of Melchizedek in Heb. 7:6, RV, 'whose genealogy (KJV, 'descent') is not counted" (NT, p. 262).

TDNT says "this derives from *genealogos*, 'one who draws up a genealogy.' It occurs . . . in the NT only in Heb. 7:6: Melchizedek does not 'derive his descent' from the descendants of Levi" (p. 114).

The *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)* says this word means to "trace one's descent. In Heb. 7:6 of Melchizedek, who 'does not *trace his descent*' (NEB) to the sons of Levi" (vol. 1, p. 242).

Allos and heteros

Verses 11 and 15 clearly state that Christ is **another, different** priest of the order originated by Melchizedek. There is no suggestion here that Melchizedek and Christ are the same entity. If they were, the writer of Hebrews surely would have stressed that point. But the use of *heteros* plainly indicates that Christ, although he came in the likeness of Melchizedek, was **not** Melchizedek.

heteros, found in verses 11 and 15. *TDNT* says: "In the NT *heteros* is used in much the same way as *allos* . . . It denotes the new member in a series that either continues (Lk. 14:18ff.) or concludes it (Acts 15:35). It may denote others either of the same kind (Acts 17:34; Lk. 4:34) or of another kind (Lk. 23:32) . . ." (p. 265).

Vine's says that *allos* and *heteros* "have a different meaning, which despite a tendency to be lost, is to be observed in numerous passages. *Allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes 'another of the same sort'; *heteros* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes 'another of a different sort'" (NT, p. 29).

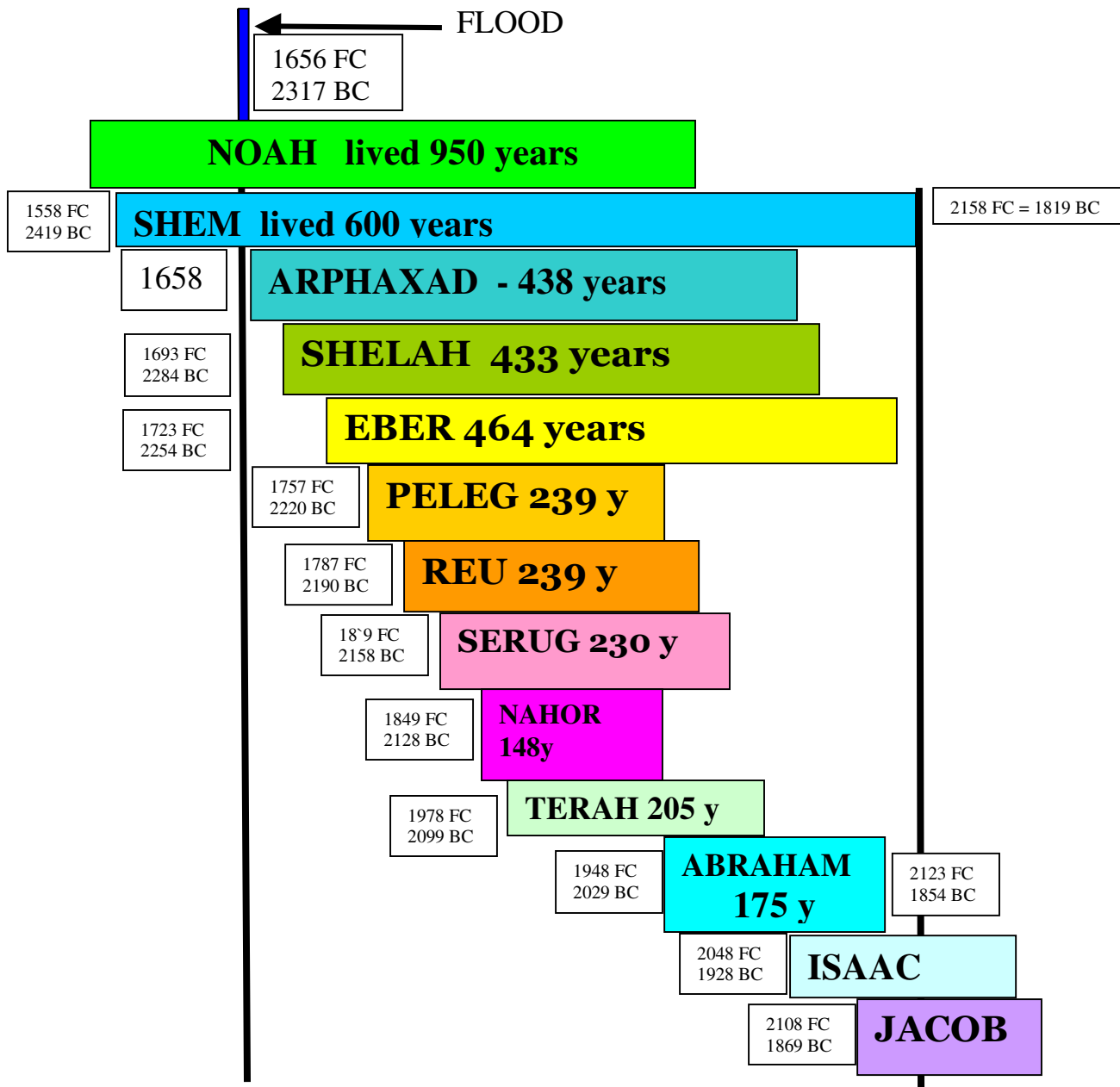
EDNT says of this word that "approximately half of the occurrences have the connotation of something additional: a further or additional instances of a type. . . . Passages that speak of another as a replacement or successor also have an adversative association (Acts 1:20; 7:18; Rom 7:4; Heb 7:11, 13, 15)" (vol. 2, p. 66).

Appendix III

Genealogy of Patriarchs

Biblical Chronology

FC = From Creation
BC = Before Christ



Shem Outlived Abraham by 35 years.
Shem lived contemporary with Isaac and Jacob.



The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek

1464-67 Oil on wood
Sint-Pieterskerk, Leuven