

**The Epistle to the Hebrews, Chapter 7, Greek Text – Westcott-Hort,
Interlinear English – G.T. Emery**

The Priest Melchisedec

7 Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ **Μελχισέδεκ**, βασιλεὺς **Σαλήμ**, ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, ὁ
This one for the **Melchisedek**, king of **Salem**, priest of the God of the most high, the
συναντήσας Ἀβραάμ ὑποστρέφοντι ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τῶν βασιλέων καὶ
having met **Abraham** returning from of the slaughter¹ of the **kings** and
εὐλογήσας αὐτόν,
blessed **him**,
2 ᾧ καὶ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων ἐμέρισεν Ἀβραάμ, πρῶτον μὲν ἐρμηνευόμενος
to whom also a tenth from all divided **Abraham**, first indeed being interpreted
βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ **βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ**, ὃ ἐστὶν βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης,
King of Righteousness, then and also **King of Salem**, which is King of peace,²
3 ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμέρων μήτε ζωῆς
without father,³ without mother,⁴ without ancestry,⁵ neither beginning of days nor of life
τέλος ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές.
end having, having been made like⁶ but to the of the God, he remains priest into the perpetuity.
4 Θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὗτος, ᾧ δεκάτην Ἀβραάμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων
Consider now how great⁷ this one, to whom a tenth **Abraham** gave out of the best of the spoils⁸
ὁ πατριάρχης.
the patriarch.
5 καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευὶ τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες ἐντολὴν
And the indeed out of the sons of **Levi** the office of priesthood⁹ receiving command
ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν κατὰ τὸν νόμον, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς
have to take tithes from the people according to the Law, that is the brothers
αὐτῶν, καίπερ ἐξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ·
of them, though having come forth out of the loins of **Abraham**;
6 ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν δεδεκάτωκεν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τὸν
the but not being reckoned by descent¹⁰ out of them has tithed **Abraham**, and the
ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκεν.
having the promises has blessed.
7 χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται.
Apart from and all contradiction the less by of the better is blessed.
8 καὶ ὧδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι λαμβάνουσι, ἐκεῖ δὲ
And here indeed tithes dying men receive, there but
μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῆ.
being testified that he lives.

1 κοπῆς , n.f., slaughter, cutting to pieces – only here in the NT

2 Genesis 14:17-20.

3 ἀπάτωρ, n.m., without father – no father recorded, - only here in the NT

4 ἀμήτωρ , n.m., without mother – mother unknown, - only here in the NT.

5 ἀγενεαλόγητος, adj., without recorded ancestry, - only here in the NT.

6 ἀφωμοιωμένος, v., make like, render similar, perfect, passive, participle, - only here in the NT.

7 Also in Gal. 6:11.

8 ἀκροθινίων , n.n., - top of the heap, the best of the spoils were offered to the gods, - only here in the NT.

9 Also in Lk. 1:9.

10 γενεαλογούμενος, v., trace ancestry, recount lineage, present passive, participle, - only here in the NT.

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9 καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἶπεῖν δι' Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Λεὺϊς ὁ δεκάτας λαμβάνων
And so a word¹¹ to say through Abraham and Levi the tithes receiving

δεδεκάπῳται·

has been made to pay tithes;¹²

10 ἔτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ὀσφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἦν ὅτε συνήντησεν αὐτῷ Μελχισέδεκ.
yet for in the loins of the father he was when met with him Melchisedek.

11 Εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευιτικῆς ἱερωσύνης ἦν, ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῆς
If indeed therefore perfection through of the Levitical priesthood was, the people for under it
νενομοθέτηται, τίς ἔτι χρεῖα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἕτερον
had been given Law, what further necessity according to the order of Melchisedek another
ἀνίστασθαι ἱερέα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρῶν λέγεσθαι;

to arise a priest and not according to the order Aaron to be named after?

12 μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ νόμου μετάθεσις γίνεται..
Being changed for the office of priest out of necessity also of law a change is made.

13 ἐφ' ᾧ γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα, φυλῆς ἐτέρας μετέσχηκεν, ἀφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς
Upon whom for is said these things, tribe another has partaken, from which no one
προσέσχηκεν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ·

has come near to the altar;

14 πρόδηλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξ Ἰούδα ἀνατέταλκεν ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν, εἰς ἣν φυλὴν
openly evident for that out of Judah has risen up the Lord of us, in regard to which tribe
περὶ ἱερέων οὐδὲν Μωϋσῆς ἐλάλησεν.

concerning priests nothing Moses spoke.

15 καὶ περισσότερον ἔτι κατάδηλον ἔστιν, εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοίότητα
And far more yet evident¹³ it is, if according to the likeness¹⁴

Μελχισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος,

Melchisedek arises a priest another,

16 ὃς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν
who not according to law of command of fleshy has become but according to power
ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου.

of life indissoluble¹⁵,

17 μαρτυρεῖται γὰρ ὅτι

He testifies for that

Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

You a priest into the age

κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ

according to the order of Melchisedek, ¹⁶

18 ἀθέτησις μὲν γὰρ γίνεται προαγούσης ἐντολῆς διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς
a rejection¹⁷ indeed for becomes of going before command because the of it weakness
καὶ ἀνωφελές,

and useless,¹⁸

11 ἔπος, n.n., word, - only here in the NT.

12 Perfect, passive, indicative.

13 κατάδηλον, adj., evident – only here in the NT.

14 Also in 4:15

15 ἀκαταλύτου. - adj., indissoluble, endless, - only here in the NT.

16 Psalm 110:4

17 Also in 9:26

18 Also in Tit. 3:9

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19 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος, ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος, δι' ἧς
nothing for made perfect the law, a bringing in¹⁹ but of a better hope, through which
ἐγγίζομεν τῷ θεῷ.
we come near to the God.

20 Καὶ καθ' ὅσον οὐ χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας· οἱ μὲν γὰρ χωρὶς
And according to in as much not without taking an oath; the indeed for without
ὀρκωμοσίας εἰσὶν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες,
taking an oath are priests having become²⁰,

21 ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτὸν,
the but with taking an oath through of the saying unto him,

Ἦμοσεν κύριος

Swore Lord

καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται,

and not will change His mind,

Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

You a priest into the age.

22 κατὰ τοσοῦτο καὶ κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγγυος Ἰησοῦς.
According to so much also of a better testament has become surety²¹ Jesus.

23 καὶ οἱ μὲν πλείονες εἰσὶν γεγονότες ἱερεῖς διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι
And the indeed many are having become²² priests through the death to be hindered
παραμένειν·
to abide beside;

24 ὁ δὲ διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην.

the but because the to abide him into the age inalienable he has the office of priest.

25 ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ,
Whence also to save to the perfectly²³ he is able the coming near through him to the God,
πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

at all times living for the to intercede on behalf of them.

26 Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν [καί] ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεὺς, ὅσιος, ἄκακος, ἀμίαντος,
Such of this kind for to us [also] was fitting a chief priest, holy, without bad nature, undefiled,
κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν, καὶ ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν
having been separated²⁴ from of the sinners, and higher the heavens
γενόμενος,
having been made,

27 ὃς οὐκ ἔχει καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνάγκην, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, πρότερον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων
who not has daily necessity, just as the chief priests, first on behalf of the own
ἀμαρτιῶν θυσίας ἀναφέρειν, ἔπειτα τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν
sins sacrifice to offer up, after that the of the people; this for he did
ἐφάπαξ ἑαυτὸν ἀνετέγκας.

once for all himself having offered up.

28 ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησιν ἀρχιερεῖς ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν, ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς
The law for men set in place chief priests having feebleness, the word but of the

19 ἐπεισαγωγὴ, n.f. bringing in to replace what has been – only here in the NT

20 Perfect, active, participle.

21 ἔγγυος, adj., surity, sponsor, - only here in the NT.

22 2nd Perfect, active, participle.

23 Also in Lk. 3:11

24 Perfect, passive, participle.

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ὄρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον.
taking of oath of the after the law a Son into the age having been made perfect.²⁵

Melchisedec

There are two references to Melchisedec in our canonical books – Genesis 14:17-20 and Psalm 110:4.

Genesis 14:17 *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.*

18 *And Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.*

19 *And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:*

20 *And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. (AV)*

Psalm 110:4 *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (AV).*

Greek of Gen. 17- 20 is slightly different.

17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after he returned from the slaughter of Chodollogomor, and the kings with him, to the valley of Saby (Σαβύ) ; this was the plain (πεδῖον) of the kings.

18. And Melchisedec king of Salem, brought forth loaves (ἄρτους) and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God.

19. And he blessed Abram (Ἀβραμ), and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, who made heaven and earth.

20. And blessed be the most high God who delivered your enemies under your hand (ὑποχειρίους). And Abram gave him tenth parts (δεκάτην) of all.

The Greek text of Psalm 110 (109 in the LXX) is very similar to the Hebrew rendering.

Of the non-canonical texts the account by Josephus (Antiq. 9:2) of Melchisedec is the most extensive and well known:-

2. *So Abram, when he had saved the captive Sodomites, who had been taken by the Assyrians, and Lot also, his kinsman, returned home in peace. Now the king of Sodom met him at a certain place, which they called The King's Dale, where Melchisedec, king of the city Salem, received him. That name signifies, the righteous king: and such he was, without dispute, insomuch that, on this account, he was made the priest of God: however, they afterward called Salem Jerusalem. Now this Melchisedec supplied Abram's army in an hospitable manner, and gave them provisions in abundance; and as they were feasting, he began to praise him, and to bless God for subduing his enemies under him. And when Abram gave him the tenth part of his prey, he accepted of the gift: but the king of Sodom desired Abram to take the prey, but entreated that he might have those men restored to him whom Abram had saved from the Assyrians, because they belonged to him. But Abram would not do so; nor would make any other advantage of that prey than what his servants*

25 Perfect, active, participle.

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had eaten; but still insisted that he should afford a part to his friends that had assisted him in the battle. The first of them was called Eschol, and then Enner, and Mambre.(trans. William Whiston)

Other non-canonical references include many Targums – Aramaic translations, transliterations and commentaries on the Bible. Many were written down in the 1st century AD and later, but had been handed down in the Jewish oral tradition through many generations. The various targums which do not support the Christian interpretation of Genesis 14:17-20 or Psalm 110:4 are not necessarily anti-Christian but reflect opposing views amongst the Rabbis. St. Jerome summarizes the Jewish understanding of the Melchisedec tradition of his own time thus:-

And Melchisedech king of Salem...

Because our little book is, in a word, a collection of Hebrew questions or traditions, let us therefore introduce what the Hebrews think about this. They declare that this man is Sem, the son of Noah, and by calculating the years of his life, they show that he lived up to the time of Isaac; and they say that all the first-born sons of Noah were priests before Aaron performed the priestly office. Next, by "king of Salem" is meant king of Jerusalem, which was formerly called Salem.

Compute the number of years through each generation and you will find that from the birth of Shem to the begetting (generation) of Abram there are three hundred and ninety years. Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years. Having made the subtraction, it follows that Shem outlived Abraham — his descendant to the tenth degree — by thirty-five years.²⁶

Now the writer of Hebrews says:-

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, 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 by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Since so much Jewish tradition equates Melchisedec with Shem the following observations must be made -

- Melchisedec was not 'without father, without mother' since his parents were Noah and his wife. Shem was Noah's eldest son and it is considered that the nation of Israel sprang from him.
- Although Melchisedec lived to a great age he did die and he **was** born to Noah and his wife.
- There is some antagonism towards Melchisedec because he blessed Abram before he blessed God for having delivered Abram's enemies into his hands.
- There was further opposition because there are ancient traditions that link our priest with Samaria, in particular, Scythopolis, where his palace was said to be.

²⁶ Martin McNamara, Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin.

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- His priestly office has been questioned by Jews, but he was entitled to bless Abram since he (Melchisedec) was an ancestor and entitled to receive tithe as the senior person.

Melchisedec being '*Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;*' as reported in Hebrews is based entirely on the absence of a genealogy in Genesis.

McNamara gives more evidence of the Jewish understanding of Melchisedec as recorded in various Targums.

Tg. Onq.	Tg. Ps.-J.	Tg. Neof.	Frg. Tgs.PVNL; Tg. Neof. marg
17 Then the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after [Abram] had returned from slaying Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him to the empty plain, which is the race-course of the king.	17 When he returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him at the levelled plain, which is the king's race-course.	17 And the king of Sodom came out to meet him, after he had returned from slaying Chedorlaomer ^a and the kings who were with him, in the Valley of the Gardens ^a , that is, the valley of the king.	17 ^{a-a} and the kings who were with him in the Valley of Hazoza, that is the place [lit house] of the Valley of the King (Frg. Tgs. ^{VNL}); to the Valley of Hazoza, that is the place [lit: house] of the Valley of the King (Tg. Neof. marg).
18 Now Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem, brought out bread and wine, for he was ministering before God Most High.	18 And the righteous king – he is Shem, the son of Noah – the king of Jerusalem, came out to meet Abram, and he brought out to him bread and wine; and at that time he was ministering before God Most High.	18 ^a And Melchisedech, the king of Jerusalem — he is Shem the Great — brought out bread and wine, for he was a priest ministering in the high priesthood ^b before God Most High ^{ab} .	18 ^{a-a} and Melchisedek the king of Jerusalem, he is Shem the Great, was a priest to God Most High (Frg. Tgs. ^{VNL}); and Melchizedek the king of Jerusalem — who is Shem the Great — was a priest of the Most High; he brought out
Abram before God Most High whose possessions are heaven and earth.	Abram from [before] God Most High, who for the sake of the righteous created heaven and earth.	Abram ^a before God Most High ^a who in his Memra made the heavens and the earth.	ring, in the high priesthood before God Most High (Frg. Tg. ^P). 18 ^{b-b} =19 ^{a-a} to God Most High (Tg. Neof. marg).
20 And blessed be God Most High who has	20 And blessed be God Most High who has	20 And blessed is God Most High who	20 ^{a-a} handed over your enemies (Tg. Neof.

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delivered your enemy into your hands”. And he gave him one tenth of everything.	made your enemies like a shield that receives a blow”. And he gave him a tenth of everything that he had brought back.	^a shattered your enemies ^a before you”. And he gave him one tenth of everything.	marg).
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Although this Targum evidence appears to be anti-Christian, in that it nullifies the concept of Christ 'being a priest of the order of Melchisedec', it dates from centuries before Christ, and is concerned very much with Jewish theology and politics.