BC 21; Gen. 14:17-24; Heb. 7:1-17 “The Order of Melchizedek” I. Melchi-Zedek- the Priest King II. Christ our Lord- the Priest King

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, is your Savior big enough to do what is necessary? Is He able to do what you need Him to do? It is an instructive exercise to ask the following question about every major world religion- the question is this- what happened to the founder of that religion? Does the life of the person who founded this religion align with his teaching? Where is this person today? For example, consider Joseph Smith the founder of Mormonism. He was supposed to be a prophet of God- but did his life align with his teaching? And where is Joseph Smith today? Or consider Muhammad. He also was supposed to be a prophet of his god. Did his life align with his teaching? And where is Muhammad today? If a person’s life does not agree with their doctrine- if they cannot live up to their own ideals- are they really worthy of your trust and dependence? Today as we consider BC art. 21, we will be looking at the atonement through the lens of Melchizedek. The rise of the order of Melchizedek gives us a unique picture of Jesus and His roll. If you have ever watched a video where someone is trying to force a couch into the back of a smart car- you know that sometimes things just don’t fit! Sometimes you expect your car to carry more than it is able. Well, does this apply to our Savior? Is He able to carry what He must- is He able to do what is necessary for our salvation? So today we consider this theme: Jesus Christ fulfills the order of Melchizedek for the complete atonement of His people.

**I. Melchi-Zedek- the shadow Priest King**

In our first point we are going to focus in on this shadowy figure named Melchi-Zedek. And you will find him mentioned in our article- Jesus Christ is a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. In order for us to get a better understanding of Jesus’ roll as it relates to our atonement- we start in by looking at this man who met Abram in Genesis 14. So let’s see what Genesi 14 has to say about this Melchizedek and his priesthood order. After Abram returned from defeating the 4-king alliance and rescuing his nephew Lot, he is met in the King’s Valley by 2 kings. Remember kids, Abram has not yet received the name- Abraham. So Abram meets with the king of Sodom and the king of Jerusalem. So here we are introduced to this king of Jerusalem- he just shows up on the pages of Scripture with no back story and no introduction. His name is Melchi-Zedek. Now notice that his name tells us what we need to know about him- Melchi means king- and Zedek means righteousness. So he is the righteous king- as his name states. Added to that- he is also the king of Salem- which will later be called Jerusalem. In this name we find that he is also the king of peace- since Salem or “shalom” means peace. But more than that- this man- Melchizedek- is not just a king of Jerusalem- he is also a priest of God Most High Genesis 14 says. A priest of God- the great and almighty God. The same God that called Abram out of Ur is the one served and ministered to by Melchizedek. As a priest of God, Melchizedek will offer a prayer to the LORD- blessing God for delivering Abram- and as a priest Melchizedek will bless Abram on behalf of God. So this man is not only a king, but also a priest. As a priest he blesses Abram and receives a tenth of the spoil as an offering to God. And that is it- just 3 verses and Melchizedek disappears from our text. 3 verses- but in this there is a deep mystery at play. When we compare what we learn from Heb. 7, we can unfold this passage a little more.

Melchizedek is a king- He is stated to be a righteous king and a king of peace. He is identified as the first king of what will one day be called Jerusalem. This means that King David will not be the first, righteous king of Jerusalem. In many ways, although Jerusalem will one day be called the city of David, it could rightly be said that Jerusalem was the city of Melchizedek. So this king in Genesis 14 is a greater king whose claim to Jerusalem is more established than David’s. But Melchizedek is not only a king, he is also a priest. A great, high priest Hebrews will say. As a priest, he blesses Abram. By this we learn that Melchizedek is greater than Abram, because the greater one always blesses the inferior one. Abram also gives a tithe to Melchizedek- proving that this priest is superior. Our reading from Heb. 7 goes on to compare the priesthood of Melchizedek and the priesthood of Levi- Abraham’s great grandson. A Levite was ordained as a priest because of his lineage- but Melchizedek was a priest by way of vow and oath. A Levite could only serve for a short period of time, but Melchizedek is stated to be an eternal priest. So Melchizedek was in a priesthood that is greater and more permanent than the Levitical priesthood- since he was before the Levitical priesthood and blessed the linage which would produce that priesthood. In this manner, Melchizedek is said to be greater than the tribe of Levi- greater even than the HP Aaron. So to summarize our first point, Melchizedek is presented as a priest and king. One who is greater than Abram- greater than King David- greater than the HP Aaron and greater than the entire Levitical order. Sounds pretty amazing! But what if we can find someone who is even greater than Melchizedek?

**II. Christ our Lord- the true Priest King**

Now this is where its starts to get really interesting- who was this guy? Melchizedek ruled an area that was later occupied by the Jebusites- so perhaps he was a Jebusite ancestor. But the fact is- we do not know where He comes from? He has no history! How did he come to be priest of the Most High God? Where did he learn of this true religion? Shem, the son of Noah, was likely still alive at this point in history- so it was possible that Melchizedek had spoken to Shem. But here again- we simply do not know. But what is really interesting is that this unknown aspect of Melchizedek is used in Hebrews to teach us about Christ! Going back to Heb. 7:3- Melchizedek has no genealogy given in the book of Genesis. The book of Gensis is all about Genealogies- so why was there no family history given for this very important priest/ king? Well, Hebrews uses this silence to instruct us on how Melchizedek resembles the Son of God! In case you have missed this point- Melchizedek is not really about Melchizedek- His roll as a priest/ king is instructing us about Jesus Christ! In fact, Jesus is not like Melchizedek- no- as Heb. 7:3 says- Melchizedek resembles the Son of God! Jesus is here the great one-the Son of God is the first- Melchizedek is a shadow! Melchizedek is a forerunner of the perfect priest/king. To have someone/ anyone occupy an office in the OT is significant. But even before we read of the kings of Judah- even before we read of the Levitical priests- we have someone who held two offices- priest and king! So let’s dig into this.

Heb. 7 says uses the lack of genealogy to prove the lasting nature of Christ as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. See 6:20- Jesus is a high priest forever who has eternal life- since Melchizedek had no genealogy- no birth or death recorded- we can learn that Jesus the better priest has neither beginning or end. Now Heb. 7 is not saying that Melchizedek was eternal- rather it is the lack of genealogy in Genesis that is used to prove the eternal nature of Jesus as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. So the first things that sets Jesus apart is His eternal nature. Second, He is the better than the Levitical priesthood because He is not a priest based on blood but on a vow. Jesus, being of the tribe of Judah, could not normally be a priest in Israel. However, in the order of Melchizedek, Jesus fills this office by way of promise and obedience- as 7:16 says. His indestructible life makes Jesus a unique priest- one set apart. He lives forever and fills this office because of His power- entering the office by way of promise- and able to keep the office by way of obedience and eternal life. In this way, Jesus is the better High Priest! The Father made Him a priest when He declared- You are a priest forever as v. 21 says. He lives forever- able to intercede for us and save us to the uttermost! As Heb. 7:24-25 says- He holds the priesthood permanently- and he is able to save to the uttermost! Holding the power of indestructible life- having conquered the grave and exalted on high- means that He is and remains our only and eternal High Priest! Free from sin and able to save us completely! No need to offer any sacrifice for himself- and able to provide all that is necessary for our atonement! This makes Jesus not only a better priest- but it also means that we have access to a better covenant as v. 22. A covenant not of bulls and goats- but of the perfect forgiveness of all our sins by way of shed blood. Just as an aside, you will remember that back in Genesis 14 that Melchizedek brought out bread and wine to celebrate this victory with Abram. By this we see the perfect High Priest celebrate the Lord’s Supper with His people- foreshadowed in the OT covenant! Where Jesus would give us His very body and blood to be our food and drink unto eternal life! But He is not only the perfect High Priest, He is also the eternal, righteous king! He is ruling over all- called the Prince of Peace and Lord of Lord in Isaiah 9. Jesus takes His place- seated on the throne at the right hand of the Father in 8:1- our exalted king of righteousness and peace! One who will rule over the heavenly Jerusalem- who brings the blessings of communion and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb! This truth is here for your comfort! You have a living, great High Priest who has secured your pardon- who prays for you, blesses you, and feeds you! The necessary sacrifice has been made and your atonement secured! Jesus is thee greater One- the first King and Priest who blessed Abram by the hands of Melchizedek! So when we think about the atonement as we read in BC art. 21- words like perfect, eternal, once for all and complete describe this ministry of our eternal High Priest!

As we close, the supremacy of Jesus Christ is clearly on display today! As we confess in our article, we believe that Jesus Christ is a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek- make such by an oath- to appease wrath and provide full satisfaction for us! He is thee greatest One! The Christ our messaiah- anointed to be our prophet, priest and king! Greater than David as the King of righteousness and peace! Greater than Abram when He fulfills the promise of covenantal blessing! Greater than the Levites as He lives forever as our great, High Priest! Jesus is able to carry the weight of our sins and secure our complete forgiveness! Jesus Christ fulfills the order of Melchizedek for the complete atonement of His people. Praise God for the Son of God who continues as our priest forever!