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Conducted by  
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**(MELCHIZEDEK - *cont. from last month.*)**

***Statements that Puzzle!***

The uniqueness of Melchizedek's priesthood is stressed in **Heb. 7:3**, where we find the statements, which create difficulty. It will help if, when we read this verse, we bear in mind that the writer is setting out the similarity between Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus, in order to show why Jesus is a priest "*after the order ("taxin", meaning style or fashion) of Melchizedek.*"

***Firstly.*** "*Without father or mother or genealogy*" does not mean that Melchizedek came into existence miraculously - without parents! It means that he had *no priestly*

*ancestry*, and that there were no genealogical records from which his right to serve as a priest could be established.

This reveals the difference between his priesthood and that of the sons of Aaron who came along later, when proof of ancestry was essential before a man could become a Levitical priest, and when the antecedents of a priest had to be established beyond doubt.

After the return from the Babylonian Captivity certain men wished to serve in the Temple, but were excluded from priesthood because their names could not be found among, "*those enrolled in the genealogies, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean*" Neh. 7:64.

So important was this law that Heb. 7:14 tells us that even the Lord Jesus himself could not have been a priest during his earthly life, "*for it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priesthood.*"

**Secondly.** In any case, Melchizedek could not possibly serve as a *Levitical* Priest, because, as verse 10 points out, Aaron had not yet been born! The Aaronic priesthood was established centuries after the time of Melchizedek!

Thirdly. When we are told that he had "*neither beginning of days nor end of life*", it would be foolish to suppose this means that Melchizedek was not born and did not die! This refers to the length of his service as priest. It means that unlike the sons of Aaron who became priests, Melchizedek did not succeed anyone to his priestly office, nor was he himself succeeded in it by anyone. His priesthood was unique. As the 3rd verse states, he, "*abideth a priest continually*".

This draws our attention to the fact that, unlike the Aaronic priests, Melchizedek did not commence his ministry at a set age, nor was he compelled to retire at a set age. He had an "*abiding*", that is, a *continuing* priesthood.

Under the Law of Moses, a descendant of Aaron became an apprentice at 25 years of age, carrying the Tabernacle and performing similar menial tasks, and he became a full priest at 30 years of age.

God's law governing priesthood was extremely benevolent and was considerate of the heavy work involved in priesthood. That law stated that a priest must retire from service upon reaching the age of 50, although, if he wished and was able, he might continue to serve in a *voluntary* capacity, (Numbers 8:23-26).

Not so Melchizedek! There was no set time for his priestly ministry either to begin or to end, so that in this his service was altogether unique.

#### ***The Lord Jesus - Like Melchizedek - King and Priest.***

Taking all of these facts into consideration, we see the wonderful similarity between Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus.

Neither had priestly ancestry.

Neither served for a set period.

Neither had successors in their particular ministry.

And in both, the offices of King and Priest were combined. Whilst Melchizedek was said to be king of Salem and priest of God Most High, concerning the Lord it had been prophesied, "*He shall be a priest upon his throne!*" Zech. 6:13.

Bear in mind that this was a prophecy that could not be fulfilled during his earthly ministry, since whilst on earth he could not have been a priest according to the Law of Moses under which he lived as a Jew. But, having ascended to heaven, he now reigns and mediates as King and Priest.

In the entire history of God's ancient people, no one was allowed to serve as both King and Priest at the same time. On the three-recorded occasions when kings intruded

into the priestly function, the consequences were catastrophic.

1. **1st Sam. 13**, King Saul presumed to offer a sacrifice, and lost his throne as a punishment.
2. **1st Kings 13**, King Jeroboam dressed himself as a priest and served at an altar to a god of his own making, and the punishment which followed resulted in the destruction of the entire House of Jeroboam.
3. **2nd Chron. 26**, King Uzziah entered the Temple and began to offer incense, and was struck with leprosy.

Down through the ages from the time of the unique Melchizedek, God held the offices of King and Priest apart until He should come of whom Melchizedek had been a symbol.

God declared that it was His intention that His own Son should combine in himself, the function of Kingship and Priesthood, when in **Psalm. 110:4**, He said,

*"You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek".*

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## KINDNESS

Kind hearts are the gardens,  
Kind thoughts are the roots,  
Kind words are the flowers,  
Kind deeds are the fruits,  
Take care of your garden,  
And keep out the weeds;  
Fill it with sunshine,  
Kind words and kind deeds.

- Longfellow

Kindness is one of the most vital characteristics to the life that exemplifies Christ. Let's consider why.

Kindness was one of the forces moving God to sacrifice his Son for us. **"But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man, appeared not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us"** (Titus 3:4,5a)

The apostle wrote, **"Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ"** (1 Cor 11:1). Among the shining qualities of that man of God to be imitated is **kindness**. Paul betrayed his kindly disposition in the first letter to the saints at Thessalonica. The apostle wrote, **"But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children"** (1 Thess, 2:7). In his tender affection for those brethren Paul and his companions held nothing back in their efforts to draw the saints even closer to Jesus Christ, but were **". . . well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls . . ."** (1 Thess. 2:8).

Kindness was such an outstanding feature of Paul's ministry that it is cited as evidence of his apostleship. The Bible says, **"But in everything commending ourselves as ministers of God, in pureness, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness . . ."** (2 Cor. 6:4,6a).

Love for both God and the brethren is fundamental to a properly lived Christian life, and in 1 Corinthians 13:4 one of the great characteristics of love is revealed: **"Love . . . is kind."** Love doesn't dwell in the heart of the continually harsh, caustic, critical saint, because kindness has no place in such a heart.