

02 Which Priesthood, Mosaic or Melchisedek_ (side 2)

Sin. He did it through the eternal Spirit. If you want to be free of sin, you have to be full of the Spirit of God. Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. That's what we are asked to do, because Christ, in other words, not only brings to our attention the guilt, but takes away the penalty of that guilt if we are willing to have the Spirit of God direct our lives. That is, to be the power that influences us to accomplish what Christ himself did and asks us to do. Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect, Matthew 5.48, remember? And for this cause, he is the mediator of the New Testament. Now we know, not only is he fulfilling what we can read, and there is therefore a function of a priesthood, the presence of God, an advocate, but not only was Moses a mediator of an old covenant, but we have Jesus a mediator of a new. And this is his present role. That one, by means of death, he was able to redeem those who, through transgressions, were found guilty under the Old Testament or covenant, that they, which are called, whether Greek or Jew, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. And now we discover that the promise of the land was all that was initially given. Now we have a promise of eternal inheritance. You see, when people got away from the law, they also got away from the tabernacle, and they finally thought that we go to heaven. They misunderstood the covenant, have misunderstood the promise, and really don't know what kind of responsibility is coming. And so the general view is that in some way the earth will disappear, maybe be burned up, and we will be, you know, like the story, we will contemplate God forever. Basically, let's say, worshiping him at his feet, like Fido, the master. That's a sad commentary on the way the world has come to look at the whole purpose of life. For where a Testament is, there was also the necessary death of the testator, and we won't go further into that at this moment. But I've gone through this section, because I think it is important, that if you want to know what it is that God asks of you or that defines character, you have to go to the Old Testament. If you want to know what your relationship to God is with respect to time, you have to go to the Old Testament. With respect to money, you go to the Old Testament. With respect to repentance and the form of worship, you go to the Old Testament. And having examined it, as David and the prophets did, and as Christ and Paul did, you can begin to have an understanding that the Jews did not, to whom the Spirit of God was not given and where the faith was not present.

Thus, we now read in 2 Corinthians 3, which we have had, that we as ministers are of the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 3-6, not of the letter. We don't administer the letter of the law as it is written. We, however, administer the Spirit. For the letter, as laid out in the law, only produced death, it kills. You see, it said nothing, and if you did it, you did it, you lived, you didn't die, but if you didn't do it, you died. But the Spirit that we now give by the laying on of hands after baptism and repentance and belief, the Spirit now is not only in contrast to the letter which killed and only executed a penalty, but in fact, imparts life. It gives life, not blood, not the life in the blood, but this is eternal life. So the function of the ministry today is not to duplicate the judges of old and the Levites and the Aaronic priesthood, because if they are only to administer the letter, they could do it. There was no eternal life, there was nothing offered except you could continue to live if you were guiltless.

See, that does these things shall live, that's all. But live how? Well, live till you die, like Peter Miller's canary.

But the Spirit that we offer to you gives life.

We see then how much we have to look to the Old Testament to understand what it is that we should be doing and why that was given. It was given to point up sin.

The law was given that sin might abound, that it would become clear what sin is, and Christ died to take the penalty of sin on himself. That sin should not reign over us.

Now, if the administration, or ministration, King James' wording, of death, all that was either written or engraved in stones was glorious. How much more glorious is the administration of the Spirit? Because that glory, that administration, is to be replaced. End of verse 7. So if the administration of condemnation was glorious, I've commented on this by contrast to human law, you see how much more is the administration of righteousness? We tell you how to be righteous, how to be like God is. You first have to look to see what God's character is. God is love. The law says you shall love the Lord your God, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus pointed up that in the law, there are no greater than those two commandments, none greater. And interestingly, he didn't quote the Ten Commandments. He quoted incidental points of the law as they came up, just statements, one in Leviticus, the other in Deuteronomy.

And so if that which was done away, this Old Covenant or Testament relationship, or this administration of death, which is really what he's specifically referring to, was no longer the function or the role that God was using to deal with the people he was calling.

If that was glorious, how much more shall the meaning of all that which remains be glorious? So we have such a hope and great plainness of speech that we can define what is actually now occurring whereas before it was only symbolic. And in that day, in explaining it, Moses remember put on a veil, and their minds were blinded. For under this day, the same veil is untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ.

Christ did not wear a veil when he expounded Matthew chapter 5. He made it plain.

Moses then spoke symbolically and only a few, like David and the prophets, some other kings could understand. For even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. But when it shall, when the nation shall turn to the Lord, this veil also will be taken away. Now we've had that chapter before. Most of these we have had explained, but I'm trying to point out what I think is a fundamental problem for some, hopefully not for most of you, but I think it would help because the questions that we have could never have arisen from time to time these come our way if people had understood all of this. So it isn't that the New Testament tells us to do away with everything in the Old unless it is repeated. That argument that I said already at least twice is wrong. The teaching of Christ is that he is not going to repeat the laws in the New Testament as such. He tells you to go look in the Old and see them with the veil taken away. Now his role is that of the priesthood of Melchizedek, Psalm 110.

The Lord, Yahweh, said unto my Lord Adonai, your master, sit thou at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Yahweh will send the rod of your strength out of Zion.

You rule in the midst of your enemies. Yahweh has sworn, verse 4, and will not repent.

You are a priest forever. That implies immortality after the order of the rank of Melchizedek.

Adonai, at your right hand, shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

He will judge among the heathen and will fill the places with the dead bodies. He will rule the heads over many countries. That's the return of Jesus Christ. This Psalm of David was based on David's reading about Melchizedek who came to Abraham. And so we'll look at that account in Genesis.

Melchizedek, the king of Salem, 1418, brought bread and wine, not goats and lamb, bread and wine. And doing it so quickly, one may deduce that the common form was unleavened bread and wine.

Now he, the priest of the Most High God, he blessed Abraham and said, Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

Blessed also is the Most High God who has delivered thine enemies into thine hand.

And Abraham gave him ties of everything. Abraham's relationship involved also money.

And Abraham met a priest of the Most High God who, as Paul says, was in rank in the book of Hebrews, higher than Abraham. We'll turn to that in a moment. But we note the importance of the fact that in looking at this account, David could meditate on this and could see in him the one who was coming. Could see in him, if you please, the role of the Messiah.

You can think what you wish. I'm not making an argument over it.

But there is no question that we don't have someone here other than the one who was to become Jesus Christ. Now in the book of Hebrews, Paul, having read both Genesis and Psalm 110, takes this into account. Chapter five, book of Hebrews.

Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest here on earth, but he glorified him who said, You are my son, this day have I begotten thee, as he says also in another place. Now verse six, you are a priest forever after the order of or with the rank of Melchizedek. Now in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, etc., he learned by the things which he suffered. He was made perfect.

He grew, in other words, into the ultimate perfection and maturity and was without sin.

He became the author of eternal salvation unto all those who obey him.

He is called of God a high priest after the rank of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say. Hard to be uttered, unfortunately, seeing that you Jews are dull of hearing, which was quite a slap at them. For when the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again what are the first principles which he then expounds, and getting back to his theme. The forerunner of all this is Jesus, verse 20, chapter 6, who was made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He picks up the thought again.

Now this Melchizedek met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of kings, and he blessed Abraham. Abraham gave him ties of all. Now this name Melchizedek, my interpretation means king. Melchizedek, that's the combination, king of righteousness.

And there was also king of Salem, and that means king of peace.

So Paul implied that this man's name was very special. He was not one of the kings who went to war. This was a king of righteousness and a king of Salem and was a priest.

He was a king of peace. It's a meaning of Salem. Shalom is a modern Hebrew, you know, when they're greeting, meaning peace. He is recorded without father, without mother, without decent, without having any record of the beginning of days or the end of his life. Therefore, he could have been no other human being in any genealogy in the Bible.

But he was made like to the Son of God, and he abides a priest continually, and when he came, born of Mary, he also played the role of a priest. He was the one who became Jesus Christ. And now consider how great this one was to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tent. And to what extent the Levites, in a sense, were paying respect to Melchizedek in the loins of Father Abraham. Verse 11, if perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law,

what further need would there be for any prophecy like Psalm 110? That there would have to be another order, and not the order of Aaron. In other words, unless Psalm 110 has meaning, then you might as well throw it out, and if it there is there and has meaning, then we should expect that the Aaronic priesthood was only a type of something higher and greater. So the priesthood being changed, there is necessity also a change of the law for the things which pertain to the tribe of Levi should now be understood in a spiritual sense and pertain to a man of another tribe altogether who was never admitted to the altar, for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood. And it is yet far more evident for that after the appearance or the manner that is the similitude or the general appearance of Melchizedek, and with his role and his rank, there arises another priest after Aaron, but like Melchizedek, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment where one son succeeded another in the high priesthood, that's the Aaronic, but after the power of an endless life, for he testifies that you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Christ is of that order. Christ was not of the order of Levi or Aaron or any other name of the tribe of Levi. Christ is the head of this church. Christ said that he's changing nothing in the way the law was written, that he in fact is asking us to look at that law, to look and examine carefully, to weigh, to meditate all the law, and then to perceive what it means and to do it as it should have been done from the beginning.

Now from the beginning, God said to Abraham, walk before me and be perfect. Deuteronomy, sorry, Genesis, excuse me, 17, verse 1, walk before me and be thou perfect.

Christians are to follow him.

John was a disciple of Jesus. John tells us very clearly, by this we know that we love the children of God, verse John 5, 2, that we keep his commandments.

This is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and they're really not grievous.

So an apostle, John, could have had any other apostle, points up the importance of doing what God asks us to do. The commandments are, let's say, those highest points of law, ten in number.

There are those, of course, in the world who would like to alter those commandments.

Jesus does not say that he's changing the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the eighth or the ninth or the fifth or the sixth. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week.

That will remain unaltered. Pass over, the sacrifice of the Passover is nisan 14.

It remains unaltered. And we commemorate the death of Jesus Christ correctly on the 14th.

And not the 15th.

We have stated that clearly.

Jesus didn't tell us to do it on some other day, the 13th to the 12th or the 11th of the first month, or some other month, except to be the 14th of the second month.

How some of these things should be evaluated. David studied and meditated. Jesus came along and looked at the Psalms as well as having inspired the Psalmist. And he points up that we're to take a look at the law in such a way. Let's just turn to Matthew five again and now take another view the first few verses. We're to be poor in spirit and not haughty.

We must be willing to mourn and be concerned for others, to be meek, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers, being willing to be persecuted for righteousness's sake, to be reviled.

And then there are blessings. We are called the children of God. We shall be able to see God.

We shall be imbued with righteousness. We shall inherit the earth.

And now we'll turn to a Psalm that points up how Jesus first inspired David, who looked at the law, and how then Jesus himself worded it even more expansively. Let's turn to Psalm 37, the Psalm of David. When you look at evil doers, those who break the law, don't be envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good. So you shall dwell in the land, and barely you shall be fed.

Now David saw that you could dwell in the physical land and you could be physically fed.

Jesus took it one step further and drew the analogy of being spiritually fed.

Delight yourself also in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your ways to the Lord. Trust in Him and He will bring it to pass.

He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, your judgment as the noon day. It will be absolutely clear where you stand and why you will do what you will do in the world tomorrow.

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Fret not yourself because of Him who prospers in the meantime. Cease from anger, forsake wrath. Remember what Jesus said? You have heard it said you shall not kill, but I tell you you shall not be angry with your brother without a cause.

David already looking at the law recognized we should cease from being angry.

So if your wife throws the pot and the mashed potatoes at you, you're not to throw the pot back.

That is sometimes a church of God experienced in case you didn't know.

We have our weaknesses and they're meant to be overcome.

Evil doers will be cut off. Those who wait on the Lord will inherit the earth.

Jesus implied that too, didn't he? They will inherit the earth.

So David looked at the law, tried to understand the implications and the ultimate purpose.

Jesus revealed this much through him and even more later.

For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be. You shall diligently consider his place and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth.

Jesus quoted that verbatim and didn't even add anything to it.

Just blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Blessed are the peacemakers.

So the wicked plots against the just, gnashes upon him with his teeth, you know, they persecute you for righteousness sake. Jesus picked this psalm out. I don't think most of us realize that when Jesus gave the proposals of the new covenant in simplified form in its broadest outline, he was in fact redefining Psalm 37. The only psalm like it with these parallels.

And David, you see, looked at the law and came up with these conclusions.

The Lord will laugh at him for he sees that his day is coming.

The wicked have drawn out the sword and bent their bow to cast down the poor and needy, to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart and their bow is broken. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked.

The Lord knows the days of the upright, whether they be shorter or long, or why you may be cut off early. Their inheritance, however, no matter how short their life may be, their inheritance shall be forever. David saw that the old covenant, the covenant at Sinai, was an example for the time. And our relationship should be more. Now, the whole theme here is that the wicked are those who want to break that law. We are told to keep it and to teach men so.

But not to see it as full of loopholes that you can get away from and escape its real obligation. Though it was given with loopholes, but David here goes further and says, cease from anger, not merely you shall not kill.

So David saw that these loopholes should be closed and people shouldn't try to get around the law, but to fulfill it. The wicked borrows verse 21 and pays not again, but the righteous shows mercy. Blessed are the merciful, and he gives, for such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful, they shall inherit the earth. I will move down. Depart from evil and do good. Verse 27. We sing this song, for the Lord loves judgment and forsakes not as saints. They are preserved forever because they are going to be made immortal. The seed of the wicked, by contrast, will be cut off.

Verse 29. The righteous, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, the righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever. David saw, not merely that one generation would succeed another, but that that was only a type or an example. Now the wicked, those who break the law as God gave it at Sinai, and who want to dispose of it, tithing in the holy days and unclean meats among them, who want to commit adultery, or whatever their problem may be. They're like the wicked, who will be cut off and be no more. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever.

That is, David saw that the righteous, those who see that law and do it according to its spirit and intent, will inherit the land and that forever, not merely for a lifetime.

The law of his God is in his heart. None of his steps shall slide. I've skipped the verse 31.

What do you mean the law of God is in his heart? It's on tables of stone.

No, David saw that it started as tables of stone, didn't he? And that didn't do any good.

David saw before Jeremiah wrote that God's law, among those who are righteous and speak wisdom, verse 30, must be in the man's heart. So David, Jeremiah, and Jesus, and Paul, all looked at the law and grasped its intent and purpose in varying degrees.

Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land.

You will even see the wicked cut off. That means we're going to be present at the time of the completion of the fulfillment of the Third Resurrection.

Verse 37, Mark the perfect man. Behold the upright. The end of that man is peace.

Mark the perfect man. Jesus said to Abraham, Walk before me and be thou perfect. Jesus said, long after David came to this same conclusion, that the real purpose of man is to be perfect, as God in heaven is perfect. Transgressors, those who look at the law and break the commandments, shall be destroyed together. It's all going to happen at once. The end of the wicked is that they'll all be cut off. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. His strength is in their strength in the time of trouble. The Lord will help them and deliver them. He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them because they trust in him. And that's essentially what Jesus was saying when they persecute you for righteousness sake, count it all joy, and so forth, and James expounds on it and Peter. Now this is a strange psalm that most of you have never read very often, have you? You ever thought how much of this is in Matthew chapter five, that here is David, the king, meditating on the law and coming up with all the basic proposals in the New Covenant relationship? And he does so by looking at the law. How else would he know the difference between righteousness and sin? Except the law had said. Paul would not know the difference between righteousness and sin except the law had said, and he quotes that.

Christians cannot know what sin is if they only look at the New Testament and claim that what is not there tells us nothing of sin.

What is not there also tells us of sin as well as verses of the New Testament.

The New Testament complements and even expounds upon an ad. But there are many sins which you could commit if you overlooked what is written in the Old Testament.

If you only decide to do what is in the New, you will be making the mistake against which Jesus warns when he says, he who shall break these least commandments and teach men so shall be called least in the kingdom of God.

I would like you to go through this 37th Psalm sometime in terms of thinking how David could take a look at the law and see long before Jesus. What was there? You see, people somehow think that Jesus came with an entirely different message, that Moses and Jesus were antagonists. When in fact Jesus gave Moses everything Moses ever got, but gave it for a people who didn't deserve anything better.

Because he hadn't promised them anything better and they weren't looking for anything better.

But among those at that time were some who could take a look at the law. If David could look at the law and meditate, he was not one who had the veil over his mind in the reading of the law.

When the Jewish community in that time or ever since has looked at the law and looked at it only in the letter, there is a veil so they don't perceive. David had that veil lifted, so did some other kings and the prophets. And they then looked at the law as Jesus did, not with the thought that we now should get rid of the law or nail it to the cross or do away with everything but the 10. But we should take a comprehensive look at the law and analyze why God told Abraham to be perfect.

And David looking at Abraham's life, seeing Melchizedek as a priest of higher rank than any mortal man, seeing that there was a physical tabernacle which had the need of all sorts of duplications of things that ultimately should take place in heaven, David could understand the principles of the moral law because he understood the principles of the law of Moses.

He could see how to look at the moral law, that is to have an insight into their real intent and purpose because he saw that the physical tabernacle was only a type of something more important than what must happen as the purification of the conscience, not merely of the flesh.

And in so doing, there must be a removal of all sin. And if Abraham was to be perfect, David began to see in the law something more than an excuse how to get around.

Do you ever start to take a look at the law as most lawyers do? Maybe a classic recent illustration would be the delightful decision of the Supreme Court on these fish in Tennessee, if you've heard the news recently. That was the real letter of the law decision and probably Congress was partly to blame.

But David wants us to see the law differently.

And if God only said so many things, we should see it even more so. Now, when you have the spirit of God, you begin to see it this way. And I'm sure that there are people who thought that Mr. Armstrong really picked and chose this part of that part that he wanted done.

And he rejected the rest, which is not the case.

I don't think we always made it clear. I think that sometimes we, you thought that we did this because it's written exactly like that, but we didn't do this because somehow we had some kind of knowledge you didn't. It gets back to the fact that if you have the spirit of God, you begin to have the veil taken away and you begin to see why the law was given and what remains fundamental.

Thou shalt not do any work needs clarification in the Sabbath commandment. The seventh day remains unaltered because God has nowhere revealed some other day.

But Jesus' example shows that man should do good even to the point of anointing someone on the Sabbath.

So you have those examples. The holy days represent hallowed time. The one who was Melchizedek, who was high priest, gave to Moses information in the form of law on the basis of hallowed time.

And if not every holy day is written in the New Testament or commanded, it has nothing to do with the question of what Christians should do when they meet that evidence when they look at the law itself. And as you know, of course, the ultimate separation of the churches of God's seventh day and the Worldwide Church of God was over the question of hallowed time.

And what made this church grow and understand the Bible as much as we have is the fact that God revealed the importance of hallowed time and showed us that it wasn't the question of dwelling under a palm branch that made the difference, but that we could take and understand the material given there and interpret it in terms of our needs as Jesus interpreted the statement, thou shalt not do any work to reveal the real purpose and need of the Sabbath.

Now we'll be approaching the autumn festivals. All the spring festivals are over.

Wouldn't hurt you to go read some of these things about the autumn festivals, and you'll understand if you have that veil lifted why we do what we do and how we have to administer these things in accordance with the spirit and the intent of the law and the environment in which we live.

And we learn by what is given there, by what is to come. We have an insight into the plan of God that is nowhere else available. So with that, I will draw this somewhat repetitive study to a close. But I think that if you carefully look at the material, you'll discover that in these few chapters we have covered quite a different view that many of that many of you may have had when you first began to study the Bible or even up till now. Have a good night's rest.

2.30, no morning service tomorrow, just in the afternoon. If you know of anybody who thought there were morning services, let me say that Imperial A.M. will meet in the College Gym, Imperial P.M., where it normally does. Auditorium A. and P.M. will meet in this building. Mr.

Herbert Armstrong will be addressing all the congregations collectively.