

Who exactly is Melchizedek?

The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, declares in 1 Timothy 3:16 (ESV), “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.” This profound mystery—the essence of God’s divine nature—is not something human reason can fully comprehend. Rather, it is hidden in the depths of God’s revelation. Because of its greatness, we are urged to earnestly seek God’s self-disclosure so that we may come to know Him more intimately each day.

It is within this very mystery that many misunderstandings and divisions arise—not only between Christianity and other faiths such as Islam but also among Christians themselves.

Today, however, we will not engage in interfaith debate. Instead, we will explore briefly who Melchizedek is by looking at key biblical texts. Scripture clearly teaches that Christ existed before all creation.

In John 8:57-58 (NIV), the Jews challenged Jesus: “You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, before Abraham was born, I am!” This “I am” (Greek: *ego eimi*) echoes God’s self-identification in Exodus 3:14, revealing Jesus’ eternal and divine nature.

This raises a critical theological question: How could Jesus exist before Abraham? John’s Gospel clarifies this:

John 1:1-3 (ESV):

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Here, “the Word” (*Logos* in Greek) is not a mere spoken word but the eternal divine expression of God’s mind, will, and purpose. This *Logos* is Jesus Christ, who existed from eternity with the Father before taking on human flesh.

However, Jesus’ physical human body began in Bethlehem around 1 AD. The eternal *Logos* preexisted His incarnation.

The Word's primary role is to bring life and restoration. As 1 John 1:1-3 (NIV) testifies:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

This passage highlights that the Word is the source of life (*zoe* in Greek), and this life was revealed fully in the person of Jesus.

Throughout biblical history, the Word took many forms to fulfill God's plan of redemption:

- **The Tree of Life** in Eden symbolized the life-giving Word, offering eternal life to Adam and Eve before the Fall (Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24).
- **The Ark of the Covenant** preserved Noah and his family during the

flood (Genesis 6-9), symbolizing salvation.

- **The Ram provided for Abraham's sacrifice** (Genesis 22:13) prefigured Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29).
- **Melchizedek**, introduced in Genesis 14:18-20, appears as a priest-king of Salem (Jerusalem), blessing Abraham and receiving tithes from him. Hebrews 7 (NIV) explains the significance of Melchizedek's priesthood:

"This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. ...Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever."

Melchizedek's priesthood is eternal and superior to the Levitical priesthood, pointing forward to Christ's eternal priesthood (Hebrews

7:15-17).

Other Old Testament appearances of the Word or God's presence include:

- The **fourth figure in the fiery furnace** with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3), a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ offering deliverance.
- The **rock in the wilderness** that gave water to Israel (1 Corinthians 10:4), identified as Christ, the living Rock.
- The **bronze serpent** Moses lifted (Numbers 21:8-9), which Jesus referenced in John 3:14-15 as a symbol of salvation through Him.
- The personification of **Wisdom** in Proverbs 8, described as speaking and alive, which Paul identifies with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24).

At the appointed time, the Word became flesh, fully revealed in Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary to dwell among us (John 1:14, ESV):
“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The Apostle John boldly testified (1 John 1:1-2 NIV):
“That which was from the beginning... concerning the Word of life—the life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”

When Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” He was declaring His eternal divine identity, not merely referring to His physical birth.

This understanding refutes the idea of God being divided into three separate persons. The Word (Jesus) is God’s divine mind and will incarnate—one God, not multiple gods.

Therefore, who is Melchizedek? He is the eternal Word of God manifested in a priestly role to fulfill God’s redemptive plan before Christ’s ultimate incarnation. Later, that Word fully became Jesus Christ.

When we invite Jesus Christ into our lives, we welcome the eternal Word—the source of life and salvation—into our hearts.

Are you still living in sin? Though salvation has been made accessible through Christ, do you hesitate to receive it? Even the Old Testament believers, who only glimpsed this mystery, were saved by faith. How much more should we embrace the full revelation of Christ today? (Hebrews 2:3).

Jesus Christ is God's eternal purpose and divine will incarnate. Let us follow Him and find true security on life's journey.

May God richly bless you.

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