

CHAPTER TEN
Melchizedek as Messiah

THE DIVINE SONS OF GOD

When we consider John's remarks about Jesus creating all things and, furthermore, when we consider Paul's remarks about his being far above all rule and authority, power and dominion in the heavenly places, we must remember that Jesus, as Creator, brought all things into existence, including the vast celestial host. All those so-called gods and lords would be his divinely created children. They would be spirit Sons of the Creator, and since the Creator is God, they would be divine Sons of God.

This concept is foreign to both Jewish and Christian thought, yet it shows in the Old Testament. Yahweh was speaking to Job:

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk? Who laid its corner stone? When the Morning Stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy! Job 38:4-7.

Few scriptures surpass the majesty of that passage. It is a testimony of resounding praise to our Creator. Where were any of us when he laid the foundations of the earth? Can any of us answer? Do any of us have understanding? Who determined its measurements? Who stretched the line to define its foundations? What holds it swinging in the vast stretches of space? Who is the source of glory?

Jesus created in the dawn of time. His creation was a wonder and a beauty. God's divine children exalted in the majesty and the glory of that stupendous event.

The Morning Stars were there. They watched as it came forth. They sang together in praises to God.

The Sons of God were there. They shouted for joy as creation leaped into being.

Who are these Morning Stars? Who are these Sons of God? They exist when time begins; they cannot be human mortals. They must be divine beings. Hillel ben Shachar, Day Star—Son of Dawn (Lucifer) was there. He was a Morning Star, a glorious celestial Son. But he wanted to ascend above the stars of God. He laid the worlds low. Now he has been judged.

The divine Sons of God are mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament. Job 1:6 and 2:1 say these Sons presented themselves before Yahweh. Satan also came among them; he too was a created Son.

Many persons debate the meaning of the Sons of God in Job. They understand them as human mortals. But the setting is one of new creation; our world does not yet exist. They present themselves before Yahweh. When Satan comes in also among the Sons of God many believe he is presenting himself as a tempter among men, earthly sons of God. But the passage shows an assembly of divine beings; Satan is among them. They gather on the Mount of Assembly; they assemble in festal gathering.

We human beings consider ourselves to be God's children, his sons and daughters. The New Testament writers stated that we are sons of God. John mentioned the children of God, I John 3:10, 5:2. Paul also used this phrase several places, Rom 8:16, 9:8, and so on. In Gal 3:26 he used the phrase "sons of God." He also used this phrase in Rom 8:14, and then, in discussing the Spirit leading the children of God, he makes a curious remark:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

What did Paul mean? He is speaking about the present sufferings. They are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed. Something great will happen on our planet. The creation waits for this great event. At that time the sons of God will be revealed.

When the KJV translators met this passage they said the glory will be revealed in us. But the preposition is debatable; the Greek word *eis* is an imprecise form; it could mean to or into, it does not necessarily mean "in" or "within."

Did Paul mean a new planetary dispensation would bring human mortals out of their bondage of sin and wickedness to the bright glory of holiness and righteousness? Are we not now the sons of God? The apostles believed we were. How, then, can we be revealed as the sons of God? Will we be revealed in more glorious form? The phrasing shows the future; the creation waits with eager longing. There will be new revelations on this world in ages to come.

Is it possible Paul was hinting at the revealing of the divine Sons of God? If so, why not discuss it? Why leave it hanging with such a bare hint?

If we, his created mortal children, are worthy to be called sons of God, then surely his created divine children are also worthy to be called Sons of God. Why should the appellative not apply to those beings who inhabit the heavens and assist in its administration and control? They rightfully should be called Sons of God.

The difficulty is this. The generations gave no thought to these matters. Christians concentrated on preaching the good news of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. Little attention was paid to the realms on high. When questions were raised about divine beings they usually were passed over casually and relegated to third order importance in Christian and Jewish theologies. With this attitude, all divine beings became angels. After all, what did it really matter in our relationship with God? We were concerned with personal salvation; we were little concerned with activities in the celestial realms.

Now something new is happening. We are about to enter a new age. The conditions are different. We no longer can devote ourselves exclusively to personal salvation. This planet is about to experience more open contact with the celestial realms. Great events are unfolding but we are not ready for them. We are in a deep sleep.

As C. S. Lewis said:

"The present celestial year is to be a revolutionary one. The long isolation of our planet is nearing its end. Great doings are on foot."

If we are to become a part of the new world, if we are to contribute to the cause of our Creator, if we are to dedicate our lives to his service then we must learn more about his activities, his plans, and his purpose. We cannot learn, we cannot understand, we cannot contribute unless we are willing to face new revelations, place them into proper context, and learn how they affect our understanding and our decisions.

As an illustration of the confusion that confronts us, consider the passage of Genesis 6:1-4. This refers to sons of God also, but different from those of Job. These sons are physical; they saw that the daughters of men were fair and took them to wife. Children were born; those children became the mighty men of old, men of renown.

These sons of God are distinguished from the daughters of men. They carry genetic strains that uplift human stock. They produce a mighty race. Would such mighty powers come from an ordinary human race? Where are the remnants of that race today? Are they submerged among other people?

If these sons of God were not ordinary men where did they come from? They must be physical if they mate with earth women. But the other Sons — the Gabriels, Michaels, and Melchizedeks — are spirit beings who could not mate physically. These physical sons show there are different ranks, different functions, and different beings who inhabit the heavens. There is a great kingdom up there, but we would prefer not to know about it. The possibilities are truly disturbing.

The origin of the sons of God in Gen 6 must be from material worlds in space. They could not be from "spirit" worlds outside space or from an "invisible" universe.

Further insight can be obtained from other passages. Psalm 29:1 also shows there are divine Sons of God.

Ascribe to Yahweh, O Sons of God, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength.

Psalm 89:6 has:

For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh; who among the Sons of God is like Yahweh.

The translations do not give us accurate renderings of these passages. They use such phrases as “ye mighty” and “heavenly beings”; they avoid showing divine Sons. By avoiding the reality of these divine Sons the translations practice deception. How truly unfortunate.

To understand how this deception came about we should consider the Hebrew words for God. The first is *Elo'a*, pronounced *Eloah* or *Eloha*. This form is singular; it is rarely used in the Hebrew text. The form used most often is plural *Elo'im*. Although *Elohim* is plural it is understood to mean singular God in a majestic sense.

A shortened form, *El*, is also often used. The plural of this form is *El'im*.

Examples of *El* translated as God are found in Ps 5:4, 77:9, 78:7 and many other places. Difficulty surrounding these forms is shown by Josh 22:22. The words are *El*, *Elo'im*, *Yahweh*, in that order, repeated twice. RSV renders this: The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! KJV renders it: The LORD God of gods, The LORD God of gods. Since *El* is not plural in this passage and had to be translated as singular God, KJV chose to translate *Elo'im* as gods and not God, technically correct but violating the habitual translation of the word.

Ps 29:1 and 89:6 have the phrase “*benai El'im*,” literally “sons of gods.” KJV translated this phrase as “O ye mighty” in 29:1 and “sons of the mighty” in 89:6. In the first case they ignored “sons” completely. In neither case did they translate *El'im* as God, or even gods.

The context in both passages is heavenly. Therefore, they knew the statements were about divine beings. To support traditional views of a one-and-only Son of God they had to avoid Sons of God. This dilemma led to their deceptive forms. RSV avoided the problem by translating “O heavenly beings” and “heavenly beings.” In both cases they ignored “sons” while maintaining the plurals. (RSV has footnotes showing “sons of gods,” perhaps supporting godless scholarly views that the passage should be understood as referring to pagan gods.)

Christians avoid this knowledge because they believe there is only one Son of God, Jesus. Jews avoid it because they forgot the action of divine beings who worked with them during the Exodus. Both Christians and Jews would prefer not to look at these realities. If both continue in this blindness they cannot lift their minds to higher visions; they cannot fulfill God’s purpose.

Christian belief is well expressed by John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life, John 3:16.

This is the most famous of all New Testament passages. It is the foundation of Christian faith.

But even this passage has problems. To reinforce traditional views, RSV ignored the Greek word “begotten” and used instead “the only Son of God.” However, the Greek text has the word *monogene*, only begotten, or only-born. RSV was following the prevalent Christian notion that Jesus is the only divine Son in all creation. This notion began with the apostles and has been reinforced in every succeeding generation. When Christians read this passage they assume it means that Jesus is the only Son begotten by the Father, where begotten really means created, or brought into being. However, the phrase used by John does not necessarily mean begotten by the Father. It could just as well mean only begotten in the sense of human birth, literally only-born. In the latter view it means Jesus was the only divine Son of God who was born of an earth woman. He was the only divine being of human birth on this world. He is a divine Son who submitted himself to life in the flesh. He is different from other divine Sons. He is unique in his universe experience. He left his throne on high to be born as a lowly babe of the world and to serve as a man among men. He is greatly to be praised for his gift to us, as the premier example of ultimate service to the Father and to his created children.

(Serious scholarly debate has revolved around *monogene*. Some ancient Greek texts show this word being used as “only” and not as “only begotten.” However, those studies ignore the possible influence of the New Testament on post-apostolic writers.)

The statement in Psalm 89:6 has other implications. If Yahweh is the Creator he created many divine Sons. When the Psalm asks who among the Sons of God can compare to him it is comparing the created Sons to him. They cannot compare!

If Jesus is Yahweh and Jesus is a Son of God then Yahweh is also a Son of God, the firstborn of all creation. He is the highest of divine Sons, a Son who created. He is a Creator Son. He is a glorious and majestic Son of the Father, a great Son of God.

He is our Creator and our Lord. He is our Savior and our God. He is God the Son.

Considered from this viewpoint the statement in Psalm 89:6 can be taken another way. Yahweh may be only one of many Sons created by the Father, as Michael is one of the Chief Princes. If the Father can create one Son he surely can create more than one Son. We do not demean the Father’s creative powers by conjecturing that he may have created more than one Son. In fact, by admitting that he could create a host of divine Sons, we elevate his power and his glory. If the “only-begotten” passage in the Gospel of John refers to human birth, and not divine birth, there is no biblical limit on the Father’s creative powers. (Theologically, an infinite God would have no limits on his creative powers. To limit him to one Son would restrict those infinite powers.)

Another illustration of these problems is found in Paul. He said Adam was a type of the one who was to come, Rom 5:14. He meant that Jesus and Adam were both divine Sons. Adam was not of human birth; he was of divine creation. But Adam was made of dust (material substance and biological molecules) while Jesus was a high spirit being.

Other passages present similar difficulty to traditional views. Many believe the Ancient of Days in Dan 7:13 is the Father. We know from the remarks that this Ancient of Days is a divine being of high celestial status, an administrator within the realms of space and time, a universe authority. Therefore, he cannot be the Father; the Father cannot live within his own creation because he is the one who sustains and upholds it.

Neither is the Ancient of Days the Son. One like the Son of Man was presented before him. He must be different from the Son of Man. Would one Son of Man be presented before another?

Whether this Son of Man was Jesus or another being we cannot say; we only know he was like the Son of Man. If he were not Jesus then there are other divine beings who are like Jesus in their roles and in their functions, suggesting again that Jesus is not the only Creator Son.

MELCHIZEDEK

In preceding discussions we considered specific examples of divine Sons, normally regarded as angels. Gabriel and Michael are beings of high celestial status. Unfortunately the available material is scanty. In fact, it has done more to confuse than to enlighten us. If only we had more information on celestial beings and their function in universe affairs. One could rightly say the biblical information is more puzzling than helpful.

In this section we shall consider another divine Son, one who serves in a different role. The evidence again is not clear. However, it tells us there is a whole order of these Sons. Examination of the few biblical passages opens crucial questions about the supposed role of Jesus. The great issue of the Messiah and the heart of Christian belief is exposed. The setting is clearly captured in Psalm 110.

Yahweh says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool . . ." Yahweh has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

We can recognize immediately the difference in view that results when we separate the words by their proper translation. Yahweh is making the statement. If Yahweh is Jesus, David's Lord is Melchizedek, not Jesus. Melchizedek is the priest forever, not Jesus.

This is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It is a major pillar in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter thought this was Jesus, Acts 2:34. I Cor 15:25 and Eph 1:20 suggest that Paul believed this "Lord" was Jesus. It was a hinge-pin for arguments in the *Book of Hebrews*. It influenced the thinking of all Christian generations since the time of Jesus. And it possesses the potential to completely alter our understanding of celestial roles.

We first meet Melchizedek in Genesis 14. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, had a confederacy of tribal kings in the land of Canaan where Abraham dwelt, including the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, and other towns around the Dead Sea. The king of Sodom and the neighboring tribal states rebelled against Chedorlaomer. In an attempt to retain control the king of Elam fought the rebel kings and defeated them, carrying away people and goods. The defeated kings called upon Abraham for help. Abraham was not slow in response; his nephew Lot was one of those taken away as a prize of battle. Abraham pursued Chedorlaomer, defeated him, retrieved the spoils and brought them back to the king of Sodom. In grati-

tude the king of Sodom proposed that he would take the captives and Abraham would have the goods. But Abraham wanted nothing to do with it lest the king of Sodom accuse him of getting rich off the king's property. Abraham wanted only the cost of the operation.

In the middle of this account is the very brief remark on Melchizedek, verses 18-20. If these verses are removed from the text the story of Chedorlaomer becomes one continuous piece without interruption. We can only guess why the Hebrew scribes placed this short piece into this account. Perhaps they did so because Melchizedek is identified as king of Salem and thus would be part of the tribal federation in that area. (Salem was the original site of Jerusalem.)

Although this Melchizedek was known as the king of Salem he was also called a "priest of God Most High." He was glad for Abraham's victory; he blessed Abraham by the God Most High, and he blessed the God Most High for delivering Abraham's enemies into his hands. From the context it seems that Chedorlaomer was a troublemaker; Abraham had rid the countryside of that nuisance.

Abraham held this Melchizedek in high regard; he gave him a tenth of everything. This tithing practice carried down to our own day. Abraham's gift shows that he supported this priest. Melchizedek probably had an established operation if Abraham offered support. The tithing suggests a school or religious center. It also suggests that Melchizedek received support from other persons. He probably was well known and respected in the region.

He definitely was a physical being. When he brought out bread and wine to celebrate Abraham's victory he did so as a physical creature, someone who ate bread and drank wine.

We cannot decide from Genesis 14 exactly what is meant by "priest of God Most High." In its generic sense "priest" denotes a religious function: an individual who represents man to God, or God to man, or an intermediary between the two. It could mean a person devoted to God but who is elected by the community. It could mean a person appointed to this function by God, as in the Aaronic (Levitical) priesthood of the Hebrews. Or it could mean a heavenly being, appointed by and representing God, who comes down here on a special mission. Literally the "Most High God" is the highest of the gods, the God of gods and, from this view, would be Yahweh, our Creator. Melchizedek could have been representing Yahweh. If he acted in a religious role Abraham may have recognized him as a "priest."

Now consider Psalm 110 again. This Psalm describes a Melchizedek who is divine. He is "a priest forever." Being a priest forever states clearly that this Melchizedek has eternal existence. He is immortal. (Modern godless scholars would make this word mere trivia. For them "forever" may mean an indefinite period of earthly priesthood. Or the Psalm may mean that the priest is mortal but would be remembered "forever" by the generations. Other trivial views are attached to the word.)

Furthermore, he is one of an order of divine beings. The Hebrew word *dibratee* means "manner," "mode," or "order," designating a regular arrangement, a structured group. (*Dibratee* comes from *dabar*, "to speak." The verb root has the

sense of a structured arrangement, commonly used for words connected in an orderly fashion, as in speech, but applicable to any set of objects or items.) Because there is a regular order of these beings we may not know the identity of individual Melchizedeks; we may know only the name after the order of which they are a part.

The Melchizedek name comes from two Hebrew words: *malach* and *zadok*. *Malach* means “king” while *zadok* means “righteousness.” The Melchizedeks are Kings of Righteousness, designation of their divine roles. They function in those celestial activities that concentrate on the accomplishment of righteousness. They are one order of divine beings who are rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. They help execute the plans of the Creator. Their name suggests they participate in all areas where the struggles of time may require celestial assistance in prosecution of the plans of righteousness. If divine programs are disrupted by celestial rebellions they help retrieve creation from those disruptions.

Is the Melchizedek of Psalm 110 the same as the one who blessed Abraham?

An answer must consider the discussion of Melchizedek in the *Book of Hebrews*. According to the remarks in Heb 5:5-10 and 6:20 Jesus is the Melchizedek of Psalm 110. If the Melchizedek of Psalm 110 is the same as Gen 14 it would mean Jesus lived on this earth at the time of Abraham.

The suggestion is not acceptable. If Jesus lived at the time of Abraham, his life two thousand years ago was not unique. Nor has anyone suggested he lived on this earth more than once. Therefore, the Melchizedek of Psalm 110 would be different from the one who visited here at the time of Abraham. Indeed the *Book of Hebrews* recognized that Jesus was not the Melchizedek of Gen 14, Heb 7:15. This verifies our earlier conclusion that there is more than one of this order.

However, this conclusion raises great difficulties. If Jesus lived here only once as a being in mortal form, if the Melchizedek of Gen 14 is different from the one of Psalm 110, and if Jesus is the Melchizedek of Psalm 110, then another divine being who is not Jesus would have a celestial rank equal to that of Jesus. If there is a whole order of these divine beings it would mean Jesus is one of that order and hence not unique as the Creator.

Such is the argument developed in the *Book of Hebrews*. But it presents a grave dilemma. Either Jesus is unique, the Creator, or he is not. If he is one of the order of Melchizedeks he cannot be unique.

The position of Jesus as a priest, and as one of the order of Melchizedeks, is emphasized in Heb 7. This is evident in the statements: “. . . *what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek . . .*,” and “. . . *when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek . . .*” The idea of an order of priests is evident when the author refers to the order of Aaron, 7:11, and distinguishes the difference between the earthly order of priests and the heavenly order.

Attempt by the author of the *Book of Hebrews* to rationalize the difficulty created by Psalm 110 is evident. That difficulty centered on apostolic and early Christian view of “the Lord” (Yahweh) of the Old Testament as God the Father, and not as Jesus.

From the discussion one does not sense that this membership in the Melchizedek priesthood depended upon Jesus’ life in the flesh; he apparently held that position before his human experience since that priesthood is eternal. Therefore, through his life in the flesh he assumed some other power. His Creatorship was previously conditioned in some manner not clear to us. When Jesus took human life upon himself he achieved a personal attribute he did not possess simply as the Creator. According to the discussion he did away with daily sacrifice, 7:27, and introduced the promised new covenant, 8:6f. But the reason a human life was necessary for the Creator to assume is not clear. If Jesus created all things, in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, did he not create the Melchizedeks? Were not all lower orders created by him? Did not their powers derive from him? How could membership in the Melchizedek priesthood give our Creator new power?

The logic behind the presentation in the *Book of Hebrews* is not clear because the author was not clear in his mind about the role of celestial beings. He made Jesus a Melchizedek because Melchizedek is the promised Son of Psalm 110.

If Jesus is Yahweh then Ps 110 says Melchizedek is a Son created by Jesus. Jesus could not be this Melchizedek. How can Jesus be the product of his own creation? How could he have created himself as a Melchizedek?

As a side note to this discussion we can suggest a partial solution to this dilemma but it is beyond the range of Christian or Jewish thought. Suppose Jesus is a Melchizedek in the same manner that he is a man. Through human birth he lived here and became a human being. Through this experience he is now both God and man. Is it possible he also became a created Son, a Melchizedek? Did he have more than one bestowal experience, one in the heavens as a divine Son, and another here on earth as a mortal son? Can he be called God and Melchizedek as he is called God and man? But if this is true, and if we accept the arguments in the *Book of Hebrews*, his human life was not necessary to give him power through this heavenly priesthood.

How are we to resolve the dilemma posed by the *Book of Hebrews*? As we probe these difficulties it becomes evident that the author did not fully understand and gave arguments from his own partial conceptions, conditioned by his understanding of the divine name. Because he did not use the divine name as Yahweh, he did not see the contradictions in his presentation. He was not divinely inspired to a work of absolute truth. His writing reflects the thoughts of a man and not infallible truth.

Jesus also posed questions concerning Psalm 110. Apparently this passage created problems even in his day; he used it to demonstrate the limits of understanding of the Jewish scribes. Refer to Matt 22:41-45, Mark 12:35-37, and Luke 20:41-44.

He was discoursing in the temple; the Sadducees and Pharisees were greatly disturbed over his teachings. They tried in various ways to trap him. While the Pharisees were grouped together mulling over his remarks he asked them, “*What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?*”

(The discussions in the temple probably were in Hebrew or Aramaic; therefore, Jesus would have asked, “*What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?*”)

The Pharisees replied that he was the son of David.

In turn Jesus asked, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord? If David calls him Lord how can he be his son?"

The Jewish theological experts were not able to answer. They did not know what to say.

We would not call one of our children Lord. Why would David? If this Lord lives forever, if he is a divine being, how could he be David's son? The only answer is that a divine being came down to this earth and was born as a babe of the world in David's lineage. David calls him Lord because of his divine status. David shows him respect although he is descended from David.

All Christians believe Jesus was the divine being who came down to this earth, was born as a babe of the world, and was from the line of David. Therefore, it is natural to believe the Melchizedek of Psalm 110 is Jesus. This is the line of reasoning followed by the *Book of Hebrews*.

We find ourselves faced with three arguments against Jesus as the Melchizedek of Psalm 110:

1) If the Melchizedeks are an order of created beings, and if Jesus is the Creator, he could not have created himself as a Melchizedek.

2) If there is an order of divine beings called Melchizedek, and if Jesus is one of that order, he cannot be unique.

3) If Jesus is Yahweh he cannot be the Melchizedek of Psalm 110.

Another problem concerns us. In previous sections we ran up against the possibility that there is more than one Creator Son. From Daniel we know there is more than one Chief Prince in the heavenly realms. We reviewed reasons to believe these Michaels are Creator Sons, "Prince of princes" and "Lord of lords." There are multiple numbers in this divine order, just as there are multiple numbers of Melchizedeks. We do not know if there are a dozen Michaels, a hundred, or a hundred thousand.

If there were more than one Creator Son what would the suggestion imply? That we denigrate the status of Jesus? Would we make him less than Creator? Or does it mean that he has a vast but limited section of the physical universe as his creative realm? Did the Father start the universe, as a complete creative enterprise, and were local creative powers assigned to these Creator Sons? Would such views be more demeaning than those presented in the *Book of Hebrews*, where Jesus is equated to the Melchizedeks and thus made one of that lower order?

This brief examination also raises other questions.

1) The Melchizedek who blessed Abraham lived in a physical body. Otherwise he would not be known as the king of Salem, nor would he bring out bread and wine. But he is not well remembered by later generations. The only record we have is in Genesis. Since he is a being of celestial origins he must have returned to his divine status. If by death or translation we do not know. Will the Melchizedek of Psalm 110 also live in a body of flesh and blood to sometime return to the heavenly realms? The passage shows he is to live on this planet as a world ruler.

Your people will offer themselves freely on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains. The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

2) The work of a Melchizedek with Abraham shows that more than one celestial being has lived on this planet in physical form. Melchizedek was one; Jesus was another. (In this paper I do not discuss Adam.) Jesus was born of an earth woman. Was Melchizedek also born of an earth woman? If John is correct, Jesus is the only begotten divine Son, the only Son born of an earth mother. Then Melchizedek lived in a body that did not come through human birth. It must have been created, just as Adam's body was created.

3) What was the purpose of the Melchizedek of Gen 14? Did he begin new religious teaching that paved the way for the concept of one God later taught by Moses? Did he work with Abraham in establishing a new line of people devoted to God, the people of Israel? If he is of high celestial status would his work with Abraham be mere religious teaching? Might that work be involved in some way with long range plans for this world? As *King of Righteousness* might he be working for the eventual realization of righteousness on our planet?

How unfortunate these matters were not revealed. The Bible is shockingly short of explanations. It offers us tidbits, little teasers that only taunt us. It does not offer deeper insight into the purpose behind those important transactions.

Great revelations are now unfolding. Jesus is consummating his program of planetary retrieval and world salvation.

Is it not time to awaken to celestial realities? Is this planet divorced from creation? Can we continue to close our eyes to the greatness of God's kingdom?

We must go beyond the limits of Christianity and Judaism if we are to join that heavenly kingdom. We must learn to think in greater depth and we must act to help achieve the kingdom of heaven. We must learn to help fashion the new world he is now creating. If we cling to the old world we will be lost as it now passes away.

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. Isa 65:17.

The former things include Christianity and Judaism.

JESUS ON THE MESSIAH

If Jesus was the Messiah we should expect him to tell us plainly and matter-of-factly. He should not keep us in the dark about this most important role. We would be reassured if we got it straight from him.

Matt 16:13-20 illustrates how Jesus conducted himself on this crucial question.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one he was the Christ.

(The conversations would have been in Hebrew or Aramaic. Therefore Peter would have said to him, "You are the Messiah." We must keep these language differences in mind when studying the Bible. Also, Peter's name was not Peter. Jesus used Cephas, the Hebrew word for rock. It was a nickname, probably because of Peter's stocky build. We use the same nickname today. Peter is from the Greek Petras = rock, translated thus from the Hebrew Cephas.)

A most remarkable fact of the New Testament is the lack of instruction by Jesus on the Messiah. Jesus did not discourse on the Messiah, either publicly to the crowds, or privately to his apostles. The gospel record has no evidence of such instruction. On the contrary, he strictly charged his apostles to tell no one he was the Messiah.

What did he say about the Messiah? What does the gospel record show?

We have his question to the scribes about the passage from Psalm 110, Matt 22:41-46, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44. We also have his question to the apostles in Matt 16:16, with the parallels in Mark 8:29 and Luke 9:20. Other than that he is recorded admitting he was the Messiah to a Samaritan woman in John 4:25-26. He is also recorded admitting it to Caiaphas, the high priest, in Mark 14:61-62.

However, even the last two admissions are unsupported in the other gospels. The passage in John stands alone; the passage in Mark also stands alone. The parallels in the other gospels for the question by Caiaphas do not have Jesus admitting he was the Messiah. Matt 26:63-64 states that Jesus responded to the question by saying, "You say so." In Luke 22:66-68 he responds to the question from the chief priest by saying, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask you, you will not answer." John, who was a personal witness at Jesus' trial, did not

report this admission in his version of the event, John 18:15-24. If John was personally present it seems hardly possible he would have neglected to report such an important reply.

The people wanted to know, was he the Christ or not? Why did he keep them in suspense, John 10:24? Others doubted he was the Christ, John 7:41.

How could Jesus neglect something so important? Why did he not teach he was the Messiah? When he states that he will be sitting at the right hand of the Father in power and great glory he is showing that he is God, the Creator, and not a mere planetary ruler.

The word *Christian* means one who is a follower of the Christ, or of the Messiah. All Christianity is pervaded with the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The apostles believed he was; Peter and John taught he was. Paul believed he was; his title for Jesus was Christ, the Messiah, used everywhere in his letters.

But the most Jesus admits directly to his apostles is to bless Peter for the insight he was given by the Father. We do not know if he blessed Peter because Peter knew he was the Messiah or because Peter recognized him as a divine Son of God. The parallels in Mark 8:29 and Luke 9:20 do not report the blessing. See also John 6:69.

Thus we can see the great difficulty of Jesus as the Messiah presented by the New Testament.

The record does not attest the belief in Jesus as the Messiah; it is inferred from tradition. The consensus, by those who have examined this problem, is that he taught it as a secret, not to be revealed because of fear for his life. If he openly proclaimed such teaching he would be arrested and tried for blasphemy. His mission would be interrupted; he would not be able to complete his work on earth.

If the claim is made that Jesus could not teach publicly about his messiahship, and if the further claim is made that he taught it privately to his apostles, we naturally ask why the gospel record does not show it. Did the writers of the gospels live under the same constraints as Jesus? Were they also not able to discuss it for fear of their lives?

We cannot believe the writers of the gospels feared making a record of Jesus' teaching. They recorded other matters that were objectionable to Jewish authorities and Jewish belief, John 4:42, 8:41. They proclaim Jesus to be the Messiah. The great difference is that they proclaim the belief; they state outright he was. But they do not show his personal instruction.

The suggestion is not reasonable. The gospels probably were written at times and places where such fears were no longer real. The four books show Jesus as the Messiah. If they were written under fear they would not have been so explicit. Yet they contain nothing of Jesus' secret teaching on the Messiah.

Mark is the most brief of the four gospels, and the most simple in its style and exposition. Biblical scholars believe the earliest date for that gospel was 55 to 60 AD. They also believe the book was written in Rome or some distant city. If this opinion is correct why would Mark fear to discuss Jesus' secret teaching?

The gospel of Matthew is made up of three elements; these are known as the M, the Q, and the Mark. The entire gospel of Mark is included in Matthew except for fifty-five verses. The Q element contains portions also found in Luke. The M element contains portions not found in the other gospels.

The *Book of Matthew* is more polished and more coherent in its structure than Mark. Therefore, scholars believe the writer spent more time and more care in forming it. Since it contains most of Mark, scholars believe the writer borrowed from Mark. Mark could not have borrowed from Matthew; if he had he would display the greater polish and style of Matthew. Also, why would Mark remove large sections from the Matthew document if he borrowed from Matthew? Based on these facts and deductions Matthew must have been written after Mark. Since time would be required for the writing of Mark to circulate, most scholars believe that Matthew was written after the destruction of the Jewish nation in 70 AD.

The writer of Matthew may not have been a personal apostle. Perhaps he was unaware of Jesus' teaching on the Messiah. If Mark did not write about it, and if he borrowed from Mark it would not show in those portions. But what of the Q and M portions? If they came from other sources were those sources also lacking in such teaching? And how could any person, displaying such devotion to Jesus, personal apostle or not, avoid such an important subject?

The same problem is in the Luke and John accounts. Luke admits he obtained his information from others, 1:2. He also states that many had undertaken to compile a narrative of those things which had been accomplished "among us," 1:1. Luke's sources are more uncertain. The Q element suggests a widely circulated writing which was employed by the writer of Matthew and by Luke. Other portions of Luke are independent without parallel in the other gospels. Luke was a companion to Paul, Col 4:14, II Tim 4:11 and Phil 24. Since Paul and Peter worked contemporaneously, Gal 2, it is highly probable that Luke knew Peter and received firsthand accounts of events with Jesus, and of Jesus' teaching. If Jesus had taught himself as the Messiah privately to the apostles Peter would have been overflowing with that fact to everyone he met, including Luke. Therefore, Luke should have included such reports in his book. But he does not.

The problem is even more severe when considering John. Of all the apostles John was the most intimate with Jesus, the "one whom Jesus loved," John 13:3, 20:2 and 21:7. John was always one of those elected to be alone with Jesus on special occasions, Matt 17:1, Mark 9:2, 13:33, Luke 8:51, 9:28, and so on. If Jesus had explicitly taught that he was the Messiah John would have known about it. Scholars believe John wrote his gospel toward the end of the first century when he was an old man and far removed from the events of the earlier persecutions. He should have had no fear about such teaching. But he does not report it in his book.

The record shows the apostles looked forward expectantly to the establishment of the messianic kingdom. Luke 9:46-48 and Mark 9:33-35 record an argument about who would be preferred in the coming kingdom. Jesus quickly dampens their fond hopes; he tells them that the greatest shall be least and the least greatest. Matt 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45 record a request by the Zebedee brothers, James and John, that they be placed at his right and left hand, directly beneath him and second in command. They desired

highest authority in his coming glory. Although they meant earthly glory in the coming kingdom Jesus tells them this glory was reserved and appointed by the Father in the heavenly kingdom. They cannot share in such appointment. These responses by Jesus illustrate that he was not building a kingdom on earth; his kingdom was in heaven. When he stood before Pilate he stated explicitly that his kingship was not of this world, John 19:36. Later he tells them they will share in that heavenly kingdom; they will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, Matt 19:27-30, Mark 10:28-31 and Luke 18:28-30. But this is in a future age in the heavenly places after they have achieved eternal life.

The Messiah will rule on earth; Jesus said he rules in heaven.

From the absence of evidence we must conclude that Jesus did not teach he was the Messiah. He did not merely neglect it; he intentionally avoided it. His question to the apostles about what the people said showed his desire that they not teach he was the Messiah.

If they believed Jesus was the Messiah they probably would have waited expectantly for him to proclaim his rulership. This would have heightened their memory of any chance remark. Any occasion on which Jesus would discuss his messiahship probably would have been etched on their minds. They would not forget. But of the gospel record only three cases are recorded where he admits being the Messiah; two of those are to strangers and not to his personal apostles, and those two are unsupported in the other gospels.

There is only one logical conclusion; early Christians knew of no such teaching. It did not exist. Hence, it remained unrecorded.

This conclusion is strengthened when we recognize the importance of such teaching to Christian belief. It is the most important single element in Jesus' life for interpretation of Old Testament prophecies and for the future expectation of this world. It could not be ignored. If Jesus taught he was the Messiah the gospel record would show it.

In view of these facts how do we reconcile the three cases where he admits he is the Messiah? Why would he admit it privately to a Samaritan woman and not admit it directly to the apostles, John 4:25-26? Some believe he could say this in Samaria, outside the domain of the Jewish rulers, but that he could not admit it in Judea where he might be arrested and executed for blasphemy. However, such explanation is forced; it is tailored to answer the problem.

The other occasion when Jesus admits being the Messiah is to Caiaphas the high priest, Mark 14:62. But the writer of Matthew, who had to know the Mark text if he borrowed it directly, does not include this important admission in his version of the account. It does not seem possible he would let pass such an important reply. He could not ignore such a momentous remark. Therefore we must conclude that he did not believe Jesus made the remark and left it out of his record. Instead he puts Jesus' reply in a frame which displays more familiar knowledge and more realistic portrayal of that scene. Jesus never admitted he was the Messiah to Caiaphas; he merely said, "You say so."

The scene with Caiaphas is important.

Again the accounts differ in their details. Refer Matt 26:57-68, Mark 14:53-65, Luke 22:66-71, and John 18:13-14, 19-24.

We should recall that the Jewish nation was in a precarious position with Roman authorities. The Zealots were provocative; a generally rebellious mood existed among the Jews. The Jewish rulers were concerned that turmoil and upheaval would threaten opportunities for independence or bring even greater repression by the Romans. Therefore, the work of Jesus was of great concern to them. Caiaphas had remarked that it was better for one man to die than the whole nation perish, John 18:14. When Jesus was brought before the council Caiaphas asked Jesus about his doctrines and his teaching. Jesus replied that his teaching was all done openly, in the synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews gathered. Why should the high priest have to ask him; why did he not ask those who had listened to him, John 18:19-21?

Here Jesus plainly states that he had no secret doctrines or teachings. All that he taught was known publicly. He did not teach he was the Messiah.

The trial continued with witnesses brought to deny Jesus' veracity. Many of these had been employed to bear false testimony but they could not agree with one another. Two or three stated that Jesus claimed he could destroy the temple of God and build it again in three days. To this Jesus answered nothing; he knew a defense was useless. However, the witnesses may have misunderstood remarks made by Jesus. If he spoke about himself being the temple of God, and being able to raise it again in three days, they may have understood this to mean the temple of Herod. In this respect they were honest, although mistaken. Refer Matt 26:60-61, Mark 14:57-58.

Caiaphas asks Jesus if he had any response to the testimony. Jesus remains silent. Caiaphas then asks him if he is the Messiah, the Son of God. But the question is not a mild one, asked as a formality to obtain an unexpected confession from Jesus, or to bait him into blasphemy. The high priest was truly concerned that Jesus might be the Messiah. He said, *"I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of God."*

Caiaphas had reasons to be concerned. If Jesus was truly the Messiah he could not be condemned to death. There could remain no doubt about Jesus. When Jesus replies, *"You say so,"* and when he further replies that thereafter they will see him sitting at the right hand of power in the clouds of heaven, Caiaphas no longer fears. The Messiah rules on earth, not in heaven. This man claims to be God. The answer is true blasphemy; he must be condemned to death.

JESUS ON HIMSELF

If Jesus did not teach he was the Messiah what did he teach about himself? How did he portray his role in celestial affairs? Did he give us information about his divine status?

Yes and no: he gave us new teaching but kept his divine role in the background. His intent was to uplift us spiritually, not to concentrate on himself. He lived as a man; he taught truth and light. Only on rare occasions did he refer to himself. As John wrote:

And no man has gone up into heaven except the one coming down from heaven, the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert so it behooves the Son of Man to be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him would not perish but would have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through him might be saved, John 3:13-17.

Jesus time and again referred to himself as the Son of Man. Only occasionally did he refer to himself as the Son of God.

The title "Son of Man" denotes a divine being who came down from heaven, was born as a babe of the world, took on the form of human flesh, lived, and died as a man. He then became a Son of Man.

The title appears in Dan 7:13. Daniel saw visions in the night and one like the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days. At that time there was given to the Son of Man dominion and glory and the kingdom that all peoples, nations, and tongues should serve him. His kingdom is an everlasting dominion that shall never be destroyed. But did this "everlasting kingdom" mean an earthly kingdom or a heavenly kingdom? Did Jesus earn title to his heavenly kingdom through his life in the flesh?

The title "Son of Man" is also used in the ancient *Book of Enoch*.

And at that hour the Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, and his name before the Head of Days. . . . And he shall be the light of the nations. Enoch 48:2-4

Christians traditionally believe Dan 7:13 to be a prophecy of the Messiah. But it raises a crucial question. The setting is celestial, not terrestrial. Dominion and glory and kingdom mean celestial dominion, Godly glory, and heavenly kingdom. They cannot mean mere earthly glory, terrestrial dominion, or national kingdom. If Jesus is this Son of Man, and if he is the Creator, all would be subject to him. He would have rule, power and authority above all other rule, power and authority in the heavenly places, Col 1:16, Eph 6:12.

Paul stated in Eph 3:9-10 that grace was given him to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ and

“... to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

This remark is profound. Paul's work was so important, through the church he was helping to build, that the manifold wisdom of Jesus would be made known to the heavenly rulers and authorities. A work on this earth would have repercussions throughout the heavenly realms.

This planet plays a key role in the unfolding plans of our Creator. He chose it as the site for a unique universe experience. His life on this world would benefit the entire universe.

Paul amplified this thought in Philippians 2:9-11.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus was God, but did not count this as a thing to be held to himself. He humbled himself to take on the form of man and to make himself a servant. He made a public example to the fallen divine Sons by assuming such servitude. His human life gave him full universe experience, not merely as Creator, the highest universe status, but also as man, the lowest universe status. He could assume full sovereignty over his creation because of this personal experience. Through his death and resurrection he not only proved his power as universe Creator; he also acquired full power as universe Administrator. He made the ultimate sacrifice and now stands victorious over all. In so doing he removed from us the bondage of law and gave to us the forgiveness of grace. No longer are we held by formalities to rulers and authorities; we can now go directly to our Creator as Brother, Friend and Father.

What other divine Son subjected himself to the experience of birth, life, death, and resurrection that he might know his people and that he might save them forever from the bonds of death?

Jesus informed us of his celestial status. He said he and the Father were one, John 10:30. No man had seen the Father except he who is of God, John 6:46. He was in the Father and the Father was in him, 14:10. He did nothing of himself, only what the Father did in him, and what he saw the Father do, 5:19. All judgment was committed to him by the Father, 5:22.

Refer to John 3:1-21, 5:17-47, 6:26-58, 8:12-59, Chapter 10, 11:1-46, 12:23-50, 13:13-20, 13:31-38, and Chapters 14-17.

Jesus' teaching was different from notions of the Messiah in a dramatic way. He was not an earth ruler; he was a divine ruler, 18:36. He came from the Father; he was God, 6:45. He came to teach us truth and not messiahship, 1:17, 14:6.

He came to uplift the world with new light; he did not come immediately to rescue it from its millennia of rebellion, default and sin, 14:16-20.

The salvation of this planet was in his plans, but it was not a primary objective of his life as a man. His mission was to teach men about the Father, and about personal salvation, resurrection and eternal life. Planetary salvation was part of an ongoing process that began in the past and continued into the future. If his life was relevant to planetary salvation he did not discuss it at length.

Nevertheless, the apostles expected him to declare himself the Messiah. Peter drew a sword to fight for him, but Jesus reprimanded him, Matt 27:52, John 18:10. At another time the multitude would have made him king, but he ran from them, John 6:15.

These episodes must have been keen disappointments to the apostles and disciples. Even to the end they expected him to assume rulership. From this great expectation we can understand why Peter denied him in the courtyard; Peter must have had serious doubts about the conduct and role of Jesus. How could he let himself be arrested if he were the Messiah? Why did he not assume authority and command? Then Peter remembered how Jesus warned him of the denial. He went out and wept bitterly, Luke 22:61. He knew Jesus was not just another man; he knew he was divine.

When Pilate called Jesus before him in the judgment hall he asked, *“Are you the King of the Jews?”* Jesus wanted to know, did Pilate say this of himself or did others tell him to ask, John 18:34.

Jesus did not want to know if Pilate was sincere; he knew men's hearts. He wanted Pilate to consider carefully how he was conducting his trial. Pilate responds honestly. Was he a Jew? Did he care about these provincial matters? The Jews delivered Jesus to him; now he must make a decision.

Jesus replies: His kingdom is not of this world. If his kingdom were of this world his servants would fight that he would not be delivered to the Jews. His kingdom is not from worldly power.

Pilate wants to know. How then is he a king? Why is this accusation of earthly kingship being brought against him by the Jewish rulers? Why are they accusing Jesus of trying to take political power?

Jesus replies that Pilate says he is a king. He does not make such claim. His purpose in coming into the world, and the end to which he was born, was to bear witness to truth. Everyone who is of the truth could understand what he taught. Pilate asks rhetorically, *“What is truth?”* But Jesus' answer was satisfactory. He saw no fault in him. Pilate saw a religious teacher, not a person claiming earthly rulership. Pilate would have released him but the Jews wanted nothing of it; they wanted him dead.

How could this be? Was not the Messiah a ruler of the world? If Jesus was the Messiah why deny his earthly power? The problem for the apostles and disciples, and for all Christians since apostolic days, is rooted in several elements.

1) Jesus taught that he was a Son of God. The Old Testament prophets had spoken of a Son who was to be the Messiah. If Jesus was a Son then he must be the promised Messiah.

2) The apostles were confused about celestial beings. Otherwise why would Jesus pose the question of who he was? The Old Testament did not make it clear; there was no open and explicit instruction. Jews in Jesus' day, and all Jews and

Christians since, have not recognized different orders of divine Sons. All divine beings are lumped together into one grand category called angels. This leaves only one divine Son.

3) God's people could not distinguish the role of Yahweh from other divine beings. This difficulty arose because everyone avoided the divine name. There was a mental barrier to clear thought. Psalm 110 says the Lord spoke to his Lord. Which Lord is which? No one knows.

4) The Master became the servant. Although Jesus did submit himself to servitude with his life on this world, the prophecies spoke of someone who would rule this world. If Jesus was to rule this world he would not rule in heaven. His full status as Creator was denied. (However, by limiting his rule on this earth to a millennium the concept of earthly rule became more compatible with his Godly status.)

5) If Jesus left his throne on high to rule this world who would conduct the affairs of the universe? Why would earthly rulership not be delegated to a subordinate created Son?

6) Jesus mentioned the end of the age. He also promised to return. This led to a belief that he would return to assume the messiahship, a prophetic promise he had not fulfilled before he left.

7) Jesus did not openly and explicitly teach about world rule. With lack of teaching on his part all persons, especially the apostles, have been forced to speculate and to interpret by the limited light of their personal understanding.

8) In his appointment of Paul as special messenger to the Gentiles Jesus continued a policy of mystery about his role and future world rule. Paul worked for the spread of the gospel of Jesus, and for personal salvation, but did not teach world rulership. Paul stated explicitly his purpose was to preach Christ, and him crucified, and to know nothing else among the Corinthians, I Cor 2:2. But this policy was not restricted to the Corinthians; Paul held to it in all his work. He gave only passing mention to the affairs of the heavenly kingdom.

These factors show why Jews could not accept Jesus as the Messiah. He did not fit the Old Testament prophecies. In their eyes, he could not be the Messiah. And they were correct, but their denial of Jesus was a greater blunder. As a people yet today, they walk the earth with a heavy burden of guilt for their crucifixion of the Creator, and for their loss of status on this world directly the result of their unrighteous act.

This list of factors shows why such great confusion exists about events on this planet, Jesus' return, the Millennium, and the future of this world. Debate rages among many groups over the significance of oncoming world events. No solid consensus exists. There is a deep crisis in understanding; we are in a deep sleep.

THE MESSIAHSHIP

The Old Testament prophecies on the Messiah provide sufficient information for us to obtain a detailed understanding of that personality and his coming rulership. All we need do is study them devoutly.

Psalm 2:

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh and his Messiah . . . I will tell of the decree of Yahweh: He said, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage . . ."

The translations render the Hebrew word *meshiach* as "anointed" rather than Messiah. KJV renders this word as Messiah only in Dan 9:25 and 26. RSV is consistent with "anointed" wherever the word appears. The reason for using anointed rather than Messiah is simple; the word does not always mean the Messiah. See Isa 45:1. Interpretation of the passages depends upon human judgment.

Psalm 2 is instructive.

1. Yahweh has a Son. He is a divinely created Son. If Jesus is Yahweh, this Son, this Messiah, is not Jesus.

2. He is a begotten Son. This may mean begotten in the heavenly creation sense. It also could mean begotten in the mortal earthly sense. If the latter it would mean the Messiah is to be born of an earth mother, as Jesus was born of an earth mother.

3. This Messiah is to assume earthly rulership. He will triumph over earthly rulers when they plot against him.

4. Yahweh will set his King on Zion, his holy hill. This holy hill could be the Mount of Assembly, the heavenly Mt. Zion. It also could be a special holy hill set aside on this planet for the ruler of this world. We cannot readily distinguish the intent from the context, although it suggests an earthly mountain.

This Psalm is a main support for the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. The writer of the *Book of Hebrews* used it in Heb 1:5, 5:5. Luke used it in Acts 4:25-26 and 13:33. When Jesus spoke of himself as the Son of God the apostles were immediately reminded of this Psalm. According to the accounts the voice out of heaven at the time of his baptism confirmed this view, Matt 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22. All Christians believe the Psalm is a prediction of Jesus.

But if Jesus is Yahweh, all apostles, all disciples, and all Christians have been wrong.

Jesus did not take up earthly rulership. He refused to be made king. He told Pilate his kingship was not of this world.

If Jesus is this begotten Son; if he is the fulfillment of the prediction of this Psalm; and if he did not fulfill the prophecy while he lived here as a man, then he must return to fulfill it. There is no other choice. But if he is not the Messiah, and since no divine Son has appeared to fulfill it, the Messiah is yet to come.

We can understand why Jews would be unwilling to accept Jesus as the Messiah. They looked for someone who would assume earthly kingship. But Jesus refused earthly rulership. He claimed heavenly rulership.

Remember also that if Jesus is the Son of Psalm 110, and if he is to rule this world, he must return as a Melchizedek. Again we ask, how many Melchizedeks are Creator Sons?

This problem afflicts other prophecies of the Messiah. Isaiah 9 is a precious one for both Jews and Christians.

For to us a child is born, and to us a Son is given. The government will be upon his shoulders. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this.

The similarities to Psalm 2 are evident.

1. A child will be born; a Son will be given. This individual will be born of an earth mother. Since Jesus was a divine Son born of an earth mother it is natural to assume this passage refers to Jesus.

2. The government will be upon his shoulders. The phrase suggests a world-wide government, an earthly rule to which all the kings of this planet will be subject.

3. He will rule upon the throne of David. The rulership will come out of the Davidic line, from the Jews. This personality will be born among the Jews and will assume rulership over the world. Since Jesus was born a Jew it is natural again to assume the passage refers to him.

These facts made it imperative for the early gospel writers to establish that Jesus was descended from David. He could not fulfill the prophecies without that genealogical connection. An attempt to trace Jesus' genealogy is found in Matthew and Luke, but the two lists are not compatible. Christians have attempted to reconcile the lists for two thousand years with many ingenious explanations, but without success. Practically speaking, they remain a puzzle; it seems reasonable to consider them artifices, designed to offer proof of Jesus' descent from David.

Mark and John do not solidly indicate that Jesus was descended from David, although Mark reports how the people proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, the son of David, when he entered Jerusalem for the last time, Mark 11:10. John shows the debate surrounding Jesus and how some persons claimed him to be the Messiah although others could not accept his origins in Galilee, John 7:40-43. Paul definitely accepted him as the Messiah descended from David, Rom 1:3, II Tim 2:8.

4. There will be no end to the increase of his government. This rulership will go on forever, increasing in righteousness and justice. Since Jesus did not take up rulership when he lived here as a man he must return to fulfill this promise. However, the prophecy implies a Son sitting on an earthly throne. If Jesus is the Creator, and if he returns, he would be a Mighty God, but it seems difficult to understand how he would become an earthly ruler. As Creator he would rule forever, as the prophecy says, but why would his rule be limited to this small earth. Who would rule the heavenly realms?

5. There will be no end of peace. This part of the prophecy also has not been fulfilled. The world today has entered the most degraded social and moral conditions, with the worst conflict, warfare, and turmoil, of any time in history. Jesus said there would be wars and rumors of wars. How, then, could Jesus have fulfilled the prophecy? Again, if Jesus is the one to rule he must return to renovate the earth and bring everlasting peace to the planet.

However, there is another difficulty. Jesus said he did not come to bring peace, Luke 12:49-53. His remarks are counter to his fulfillment of the prophecy. Again he denies his role as the Messiah; again Jews reject him.

6. A list of titles is used for this personality:

a) Wonderful: His rule will be righteous and just.

b) Counselor: Many will consult him for benefit of his great wisdom. (In some translations this word is tied to the next phrase to make him "Counselor to the Mighty God.")

c) Mighty God: The term is difficult. The Hebrew phrase is *El G'bor*. It could be understood in the same sense Paul used the god of this world, II Cor 4:4. It also may be used in the sense of the many gods and many lords in the heavenly places. This personality would be one of those many gods and many lords. He is a mighty god among the heavenly gods. In this sense he would be a mighty god, but not Mighty God.

d) Everlasting Father: This would be Jesus in his role as a heavenly Father. It also would be any immortal being of holiness and righteousness who would act as a Father to the people of this world. We know Melchizedek is an eternal being; he could easily be an everlasting father to all earth people.

e) Prince of Peace: Jesus, as benevolent Creator, works for peace throughout his dominions. This personality, reigning with righteousness and justice, would reign in peace. As a divine being he also would be a Prince of Peace.

If we change our perspective from a single divine Son and a host of angels to many divine Sons we see how our views on the Messiah become altered. But it means an elevation in vision, an enlargement of concept. It means a mind willing to reexamine the scriptures. It does not mean a tampering with the scriptures; on the contrary it means an honest examination not performed by the children of God over the past two thousand years. It means new revelation from the old revelations, a new understanding of God and his ways. But if we are fearful, if we tremble to break the chains of habit of many generations, if we are weak and irresolute, we will not discover the mysteries sought so avidly by so many for so long.

Other prophecies on the Messiah are found in Ps 18:50, 20:6 and so on. Psalm 72 is especially important. It confirms the everlasting reign of this great King. He will live as long as the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. The generations of man will flow over ages of time. In his days there will be righteousness flourishing and peace abounding, till the moon is no more! He will have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. There will be abundance of grain; the tops of the mountains will wave with it. Men will blossom forth from the cities like the grass of the fields. His name will endure forever and his fame as long as the sun. Men will bless themselves by him, and all nations shall be blessed. Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel who alone does these wonderful things.

Isaiah 11 offers further insight. This individual shall come forth from a shoot of Jesse, David's father; a branch shall grow out of his roots. He shall live at a time when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion together. Then a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed together, their young shall lie down together, the lion shall eat straw like an ox, and the suckling child shall play upon the hole of an asp. They shall neither hurt nor destroy in all his holy mountain. In those days the earth shall be full of the glory of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea.

Obviously this is an era never before seen upon earth. It will be most wonderful, blessed in peace.

Again we can see why Jews could not accept Jesus as the Messiah, and why Christians look forward to his return. There are many prophecies yet to be fulfilled. Note also how Christians compress these great prophecies covering major spans of time into one short millennial period.

Psalm 110 is the most important for identifying the Messiah, and deserves repeating.

“Yahweh sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!

“Your people will offer themselves freely on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains.

“From the womb of the morning the dew of your youth will come to you.

“Yahweh has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

The promise of the Psalm is evident. The one who will receive the right of earthly rule is Melchizedek. He will be the Messiah. The phrases show the setting is the earth, this planet, explicitly stated in verse six, and implied by the execution of judgment among the nations.

Yahweh will execute the judgment; he will shatter kings and fill the nations with corpses. He will do this while the Messiah reigns upon the earth. The Messiah will reign in the midst of the rebellious kings of the earth. His people will give themselves freely for this final victory.

It is plain from the Psalm that the Messiah rules while trouble and conflict still exist on this planet. He does not rule in peace during the episodes described here. Everlasting peace comes after these final judgment events.

The Psalm suggests a being who is in mortal form; the Messiah is not in spirit form. He must come in human birth if to us a son is born, and if to us a child is given. He grows up to become a man. We also know he is of divine origins; he is a high priest forever. He is not of earthly origin, although he will be born of a woman, as Jesus was born of a woman.

From the other promises we know his rule will continue far into the future, as long as the sun and the moon. He will take over permanent rulership of this planet.

If Jesus is not this Melchizedek then this Melchizedek might be the one who lived and worked with Abraham. But if the two Melchizedeks are the same personality we have a problem of two different occasions of physical existence on earth, as we would have if Jesus were the Messiah.

If the Melchizedek of Gen 14 is the same as Psalm 110 he probably came at the time of Abraham to help prepare this world for the future. The preparation may have included teaching to stimulate an appropriate religious environment for the arrival of Jesus. His purpose also may have been to begin a program of planetary salvation with the people of Israel. After that visit he returned to the celestial worlds.

That program continued with Moses and the prophets. When Jesus lived here he added further support to the work of his created divine Son, this Melchizedek. Jesus helped by teaching new concepts. He taught us about the Father, a new way of looking at God, and in so doing he prepared our minds for loftier concepts of universe creation and planetary destiny. But he did not fully explain his role, nor that of Melchizedek. It was not yet time to inform us of these matters. The world had to grow; changes had to take place. The full number of Gentiles has now come in. Now, in the fullness of time, these matters become known.

John made a curious remark about the trumpet call of the seventh angel, Rev 11:15. There were loud voices saying, *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”*

All other uses of the word Lord in the *Book of Revelation* are understood to mean Jesus. But here it would be necessary to understand the word Lord as referring to the Father if his Christ is Jesus. On the other hand if this Lord is Jesus, then his Christ is Melchizedek, as was promised.

We must be careful not to confuse the actions of Melchizedek and Jesus. Jesus is the Creator, the sponsor of planetary programs. Melchizedek is the agent, the executor of those programs. He, Melchizedek, is the servant for the Master, Jesus. If Jesus is the sponsor his earthly life would reflect that program; it would be consonant with the action he started as our Creator God.

However, that was not the primary purpose of Jesus' life. He came down here to make himself man, that he could be both man and God, and that he could learn and experience the ways of man to become a more merciful God. He loves us and gave himself for us. He wants us to love him. He watches over us as a considerate brother and loving father.

The Messiah will come to rule this world, as Jews so expectantly await. He lived here once before, at the time of Abraham. He will return as a babe of the world, just as Jesus was a babe of the world. Then a new era will be established. But that new era is in the future.

MELCHIZEDEK AS MESSIAH

Since before the time of Jesus speculation has circulated among Jews that Melchizedek is the Messiah. This speculation, of course, is based upon Psalm 110, the only source in the Old Testament to provide such foundation. For a specific reference see Paul J. Kobelski in *Melchizedek and Melchiresa, Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Monogram Series #10, 1981, pg 53. Theodore H. Gaster, in *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, (Doubleday Anchor, 1976, 3rd ed.), also mentions this fact and references M. R. James, *The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament*, 1920, p 17, and L. Ginsberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1905, V:226 and VI:325. The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls also believed Melchizedek was the Messiah.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were prepared by a monastic group at Qumran. The group lived and worked less than a day's journey from Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Bethany where Jesus did much of his teaching, at the time that he was alive. The Scrolls were hidden in caves around Qumran just before the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the Qumran monastery in 70 AD. We can only speculate on the formation of the community. (Contrary to popular scholarly opinion no direct evidence is available to show this community as Essene. Such identification is pure conjecture, derived out of material found in the Qumran texts.) Jesus could easily have known the members personally. Not only did the Qumran men preserve most of the Old Testament they also prepared a considerable group of other documents which describe the coming world judgment and the millennial dispensation.

The value of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* to Jewish and Christian knowledge cannot be overestimated. They provide the oldest available manuscript evidence for most of the Old Testament. We now know that the *Book of Isaiah*, accepted by the Masorete Jewish scholars of the eighth century, was a reliable copy of the text dating from before Jesus. Except for twelve cases the Masoretic text is identical to an ancient Isaiah manuscript found at Qumran.

Ref:	DSS word	Masoretic
3:24	shame	-----
14:4	insolent fury	(uncertain)
14:30	I	he
21:8	he who saw	a lion
23:2	messengers	they replenished you
33:8	witnesses	cities
45:2	mountains	the swellings
45:8	sprout forth	they may bring forth
49:24	righteous man	tyrant
51:19	who will	how may I
56:12	us	me
60:19	by night	-----

We naturally ask: why were the scrolls discovered at this time in world history? If God had a hand in their preparation and discovery were they intended for our instruction in these last days of the earth age? Do they contain information useful to God's people as the planet moves into final judgment events? Was their discovery a mere accident of time?

They provide helpful instruction. Among other keys to revelation they describe Melchizedek and his role as planetary ruler. To produce the text I compared and synthesized translations given by Kobelski, Gaster, page 433, and Fred L. Horton in *The Melchizedek Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, from a manuscript identified as *11Q Melchizedek*. Only Kobelski provides a copy of the original Hebrew. Translation is difficult because the text is preserved in only this one tattered manuscript. But enough original text remains to be helpful. I show only the text from column two of the document; the other columns are too damaged to be useful. The column of numbers refers to the lines of the original text. I show the beginning of each line with a carat (<). The reader can follow the sequence.) Biblical text is italicized with references shown in the last column. I also show the use of **EI** and **Elohim** in bold face for easier discussion.

The writer of the document was offering revelation. He alludes to, and interprets, passages from the Old Testament to present a view of Melchizedek in his future world role. He draws upon Leviticus, Deuteronomy, the Psalms, Isaiah and Daniel to build his scene.

In none of the biblical passages would we traditionally recognize application to Melchizedek. The writer is expanding their meaning to offer such revelation. Curiously, he does not refer to Psalm 110. We do not know if such reference occurs in the lost columns, or if the writer chose not to use it. The former possibility is most likely.

This isolated text appears as an integral unit of revelation; it stands independently of the other columns of the text. This implies that column one is an introduction to the writer's revelation, (possibly using Psalm 110), and that following columns are further expansions upon the presentation.

In the surviving text the writer begins with the use of the jubilee. This invokes concepts of long time spans, since a jubilee means fifty years, forty-nine plus one holy year, Lev 25:8-10. The phrase "seven sevens," or "seven weeks of years" is also employed to denote a period of forty-nine years. Lines 7 and 18 imply that Melchizedek's rule in mortal form will cover 10 jubilees, or about 500 years. This period is included in the "seventy sevens" (translated as "seventy weeks of years") of Daniel 9. The *End of Days* and Melchizedek's judgment occurs at the end of this period, lines 4 and 13. That is the Day of Atonement and Melchizedek's year of favor when the children of his lot will have their misdeeds forgiven, lines 6-7.

The identity of the "prince" of Dan 9:25 is clearly Melchizedek, line 18. This is contrary to all Christian thought and shows that the passage of Dan 9:24-27 refers to the future. The reader may draw out the parallels with Psalm 110. I reserve further discussion of this period for my chapter on *The Millennium*.

This is the period when the former Prince of this World (devil = belial) will be released for a little while, Rev 20, and will come as Gog to destroy the beloved city and the future Israel, Ezek 38-39. But he will be destroyed, line 25. During this period God's people will be restored to their lost inheritance, line 6, and will be protected from Belial by Melchizedek, line 13.

The writer used the identities

EI = God = Yahweh,

Elim = gods = heavenly helpers, and

Elohim = god = Melchizedek.

He regarded Melchizedek as the new god (**Elohim**) of this world, lines 10, 23 and 24, the one who would claim his kingdom from the former god of this world. The writer held Melchizedek in such high regard he described him as the one who took his seat in the divine council and judged among the gods, Ps 82:1. Melchizedek holds a high seat of honor among the heavenly host.

It is also highly significant that Melchizedek will instruct his people concerning all the world ages, line 20. This implies that he will provide a full revelation of future planetary mortal epochs.

(Some contradiction may exist in the assignments. In lines 10 and 13 Elohim is contrasted to EI. However, if Melchizedek will judge the nations, then he becomes EI in line 11. As I shall show, Melchizedek spoke through the prophets. Then assignment of this function would make Melchizedek EI, line 15. We may never concretely untangle these various assignments.)

TEXT	Line Number	Biblical Reference
(Broken) . . . < and where it says: In this year of the jubilee you shall return, everyone of you to his possession. Concerning this it also says < this is the manner of the release: let every holder of debt forgive what he lent to his neighbor. He is not to exact payment of it from his neighbor nor brother, for remission has been proclaimed < by EI. The interpretation of it concerns the End of Days as regards those taken captive who were in mourning all the days of the dominion of Belial who < cut them off from the sons of heaven and from the inheritance of Melchizedek. But they are the children of the lot of Melchizedek who < will restore them, and proclaim liberty to them, remitting them for their misdeeds. This event will happen < in the first week of the jubilee that occurs after the nine jubilees. A day of atonement is at the end of the tenth jubilee < to atone for all the sons of light and the men of the lot of Melchizedek . . . (Broken text) . . . Indeed < this is the time for Melchizedek's year of favor. By his strength he will raise up the holy ones of EI to execute judgment, as it is written < concerning him in the songs of David: Elohim stands in the assembly of EI, in the midst of the Elohim he gives judgment. Or again concerning him, Above it, < take your seat on high, EI will judge the nations. And where it says, How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah! < The interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his ilk, who . . . in their turning away from the commandments of EI to do evil. < And Melchizedek will execute EI's avenging judgment upon them while he protects the sons of light from the power of Belial and from all the spirits of his ilk. < And all the Elim of the heights will be his helpers. He . . . (broken text) . . . and with all the sons of EI . . . < this. That is the day of salvation about which EI spoke through the mouth of Isaiah the prophet, who said, How beautiful < on the mountains are the feet of the herald who proclaims peace, the herald of good tidings who proclaims to Zion, Your EI is king. < The interpretation of it: The mountains are the words of the prophets, those who . . . prophesied to all the mourners of Zion. < And the herald is the one anointed of the spirit about whom Daniel said, Until the anointed, a prince, there will be seven weeks. As for the herald < of good who proclaims salvation, he is the one about whom it is written, when it says, . . . < to comfort all the mourners of Zion." To instruct them in all the ages of the world. < . . . in truth . . . (broken text) < . . . she turned away from Belial . . . < with the judgments of EI, as it is written about him, saying to Zion, Your Elohim is king. Zion is < the community of all the sons of light who uphold the covenant and turn aside from walking in the way of the people (the popular trend). But your Elohim is < Melchizedek who will destroy Belial. And as for what he has said, You will blow the horn of alarm in the seventh month . . .	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22-23 24 25	(Lev 25:13) (Deut 15:2) (Isa 61:1) (Lev 25:10) (Lev 25:9) (Isa 61:2) (Ps 82:1) (Psalm 7:7-8) (Psalm 82:2) (Isa 61:2) (Isa 49:8) (Isa 52:7) (Isa 61:3) (Dan 9:25) (Isa 61:2-3) (Isa 52:7) (Lev 25:9)

THE GREAT CHRISTIAN DILEMMA

We now face the ultimate difficulty in Christianity. Was Jesus the Messiah or is Melchizedek the Messiah?

An answer to this question depends upon our understanding. If we believe the apostles were conduits of perfect truth and infallible teaching we will believe the former. If we are willing to use our own minds with sincere examination of the Old Testament, and other sources, we can believe the latter.

This is a position not to be taken lightly. Consider the gravity of the charge.

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Messiah? I John 2:22.

. . . Everyone who believes Jesus is the Messiah is a child of God. I John 5:1.

According to John if you deny Jesus as the Messiah you are a liar. Furthermore you are not a child of God. What are we if we claim Jesus as the Creator of a universe? What are we if we believe he is Lord and Administrator of his vast dominions? What are we if we believe he created the Melchizedeks, a lower order of divine Sons?

John said we are antichrists if we deny the Father and the Son. But we do not deny them; we elevate them to their true positions, as the source of all existence.

John said the spirits were to be tested, whether they are of God, I John 4:1-3. False prophets had gone out into the world. But the spirit of God could be known. Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

I confess Jesus as my Creator, my Lord, and my Savior. I believe he is a divine Son of God, the first-born of all creation. I believe he came in the flesh, that he was born as a babe of the world, that he lived on this earth, that he was the premier example of human life, that he gave himself for me, that he died a cruel death on the cross, and that he rose again. I also believe that as a result of that experience he obtained full sovereignty over his creation.

Peter said that false prophets arose among the people who brought destructive heresies, even denying the Master who created them, II Pet 2:1.

I do not deny the Master; I worship him as God.

Consider the writer of the *Book of Hebrews*. He said that Jesus was a Melchizedek, a lower order of divine Sons. He degraded Jesus as the Creator because he did not understand. He was confused between creatorship and planetary rulership. The Messiah is a world ruler, not a universe administrator.

Which of us has denied Jesus? Neither. We have understood him in different roles. But which gives him the higher position? I or the writer of the *Book of Hebrews*?

If we are to accept Daniel's statements that the words were shut up and sealed until the time of the end—if we are to accept John's statements in his Apocalypse that the revelations were shut up and sealed until the time of the end—if we are to accept Paul's statements that mysteries were held until the full number of the nations should come in—if we are to accept that Jesus did not instruct his disciples on administrative matters and did not reveal the role of Melchizedek—then we must accept that none of the apostles, including Paul, had full knowledge about these matters and that their judgments, as expressed in their writings, are entirely human and not divinely inspired. Although they were instructed to carry the gospel to the nations that gospel did not include knowledge of future world rulership. If Jesus did not teach himself as the Messiah, as the Christ, if he left these matters open without instruction, then the apostles were forced to their own conclusions. Neither Peter, nor John, nor Paul, nor any other apostle, nor any disciple, nor any early Christian father, nor any priest, nor any preacher, nor any Pope, nor any theologian since has understood.

This conclusion has profound ramifications.

1. It forces our attention to the real purpose of Jesus' life. He came here to gain experience as a man, so that he could be more merciful as a being who is both God and man.

2. It frames the concepts of Jesus as Savior, and of personal salvation in a new light. If he is God, and he and the Father are one, how could he have offered himself in sacrificial death to himself? Does he not have the power, as Creator, to save us without a sacrificial death?

3. It casts aside a whole field of notions concerning Jesus' return to this world. If he does return it will be as God and not as man. If Melchizedek is the future planetary ruler then we must reexamine our ideas of Jesus' future rule on this world and of his rule in the heavens.

4. It casts aside the doctrine of biblical infallibility. Many sections of the Bible are the work of men, expressing their personal understanding. Those sections are not reliable revelations.

5. It casts aside the doctrine of perfection through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit limits his revelations according to a full-scale divine program. All revelations are limited by the practical requirements of unfolding planetary destiny.

6. It casts aside theological developments of two thousand years. Men have built huge theoretical structures on sheer speculation. The conclusions deduced in this present paper shatter the very foundations of Christian doctrines of Jesus as the Christ.

7. It introduces the real and positive prospect of other revelations. If we were not informed about these matters, if we were left in a condition of partial knowledge, then Jesus will provide instruction for personal decisions in the grave planetary crises now facing all of us. New revelations now unfold.